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THE MASTER ANSWERS

RADHA SOAMI SATSANG BEAS
PUNJAB (INDIA)

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Master answers

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AT HIS FIRST SATSANG IN DETROIT

THE MASTER ANSWERS

TO AUDIENCES IN AMERICA

By

MAHARAJ CHARAN SINGH JI

RADHA SOAMI SATSANG BEAS
PUNJAB, INDIA

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MAHARAJ CHARAN SINGH JI

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PREFACE

In response to innumerable requests from the satsangis (disciples) and seekers of the U.S.A. and Canada, the Great Living Master, Maharaj Charan Singh Ji (affectionaly called Maharaj Ji) of Radha Soami Satang Beas, India visited these countries in the summer of 1964. He left Delhi on April 25th and arrived in Honolulu on May 7th. On the way He stopped at Bangkok, Saigon, Singapore, Hong Kong and Tokyo, as implored by the satsangis and seekers of these places, who also had been longing for His visit for many years. From Honolulu Maharaj Ji flew to Los Angeles and then stopped over at San Diego, San Francisco, Vancouver, Minneapolis, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburg, Washington D.C. and New York. He was accompanied throughout His tour by Air Vice-Marshal K.L. Sondhi as His traveling Secretary. At all the places mentioned above Maharaj Ji gave spiritual discourses, after which He answered questions from the audiences, gave private interviews to a long waiting list and granted Initiation to many applicants. He was kept busy from early in the morning till late at night, and even His mealtimes had become question and answer periods.

The spiritual discourses that Maharaj Ji gave abroad have since been published in the form of a book by that name. *The Master Answers* is a compilation of the questions and answers which were tape recorded during this Great Saint's visit. It took about a year to collect all this material from the various places in the U.S.A. and Canada, and much time was spent in putting it in its present form. Naturally, there was a lot of duplication, as similar questions were asked

at many places and even at different meetings in the same city. The questions covered a wide range of subjects and came from mixed crowds of people at various intellectual and spiritual levels. All the answers were given spontaneously. Sometimes the question from the audience was not distinct nor audible on the tape, so it could not be transcribed, and that accounts for some of the questions not appearing in this book, but as the microphone was on the stage, all of Maharaj Ji's answers are clearly recorded.

My uncle, Dr. Randolph Stone of Chicago, and I had the good fortune and the great privilege of being with Maharaj Ji from the very start of this journey. When I accepted the request of Brother Replogle, who has since departed, and a number of other satsangis to compile these questions and answers into a book, I did not realize what a tremendous responsibility I had undertaken. By His Grace and the kind help and cooperation of other satsangis that captivatingly interesting assignment is finished.

Besides the regularly scheduled meetings every day, which were recorded, practically every interview, private talk, meeting, dinner, lunch and outing, and even to and from every place, turned out to be a question and answer period. These, of course, could not be recorded. The recorded thousand pages or so represent less than one-third of the questions answered by the gracious Master, and they have been condensed to the number of pages in this book.

Regardless of the long hours and strenuous program, Maharaj Ji was extremely patient and kind at all times. He was full of good humor and answered all questions cheerfully. The satsangis and seekers from other parts of the country, not visited by Him, flocked

to the places nearest to them that He visited, to get a glimpse of Him and hear His discourses. In His presence one feels a magnetic attraction that literally seems to pull one out of the turmoil and tumult of the world to higher regions of peace and tranquility. One simply floats in rapturous bliss on catching a divine glance from His radiantly piercing eyes. Everyone seemed ecstatically happy and elevated in His presence. The love and devotion evinced everywhere towards the Holy Master were simply indescribable. Even strangers on the various flights and at the airports where He was so overwhelmingly received by huge crowds, could not but be impressed by His quiet dignity and saintliness, coupled with such great humility as only a Saint can possess. They were delighted to be able to meet Him right then and there without any formality whatsoever. Maharaj Ji was so gracious and compassionate that He made everyone feel perfectly at ease in His presence. Even children who had never seen Him before, would come up to Him and ask for His autograph, or ask some childish questions which He always answered most lovingly and smilingly.

This Great Saint's Message throughout His visit was one of Peace, Love, Devotion and Conscious Communion with God, here and now, while living a normal life and performing our duties in this world. This is the same message which has been given by Christ and the Saints of all countries and climes and of all ages. These Sons of God come to the earth solely for the purpose of teaching and guiding human beings to the higher life, that exists within themselves as well as above and beyond the physical universe, and to take them back to their Original, Eternal Home where

peace and bliss reign supreme. The method that the Saints adopt for this purpose is to connect the soul with the Celestial Sound Current that reverberates within us. In the Bible this Sound is mentioned as "the Word" which "was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." Hindu Rishis called it "Anhad Shabd"—the Unstruck Music. The Mohammedan Saints called it "Ism-i-Aazim" (the greatest Name) or "Bang-i-Asmani"—the Call from Heaven. Kabir, Nanak and other modern Saints called it "Shabd" or "Nam"—the Divine Melody or the Name. This divine music is constantly reverberating within us in the center behind our eyes, and only a Living Master of the highest order can put us in touch with it. How fortunate we were to have such a One in our midst, even for a short time. Now we are all ardently awaiting the blessed boon of another visit by Him in the not-too-distant future.

I shall finish this portion of the account of Maharaj Ji's 1964 round-the-world tour with the following two quotations—one from "The Tribune" of Ambala in the Punjab, which appeared on the day when He left on His tour, and the other from "The Times of India" in New Delhi, after His return to India:

"RADHA SWAMI GURU ON WORLD TOUR —His Holiness Maharaj Charan Singh, satguru of the Radhaswami Satsang Beas, left today on a round-the-world trip by air. He is accompanied by some American followers of his. He will visit the Far East countries for two weeks, the U.S.A. and Canada for seven weeks and the U.K. and Europe for two weeks. He is scheduled to return to Beas about the middle of July". (The Tribune)

"A GODLY MAN—The Sant I met the other day

was refreshingly different from the general run of religious leaders. He wore not the customary saffron robes of a sadhu, but a neatly pressed terylene pant of a dark shade, a white bush shirt and a gold wrist watch. He had a well-groomed, sophisticated air about him, a gentleness of manner and a grace of speech. Except for his flowing beard, fast turning grey, and the sort of glow on his face and in his eyes which is the hallmark of a godly man, he could pass off for an elder statesman or a university don.

"Maharaj Charan Singh, head of the Radha Soami Satsang, is indeed a very practical man and it is a practical philosophy of spiritual life that he teaches his followers who are spread all over the non-Communist world. He does not want them to renounce the world and sit in a remote cave in the Himalayas. Far from it. He believes that man can be "in tune with God" and can attain salvation while discharging his duties to his family and society. 'Radha Soami is not a religion', he explains. 'It is a philosophy of spiritual life, the sum total of what saints have preached at different times and in different climes.'

"Maharaj Ji, as he is known to his followers, recently spent a busy eleven weeks abroad—six of them in the U.S.A. He had been to Europe and Asia before but this was his first trip to America, which has over one thousand Radha Soami followers. 'The Americans are spiritually very hungry', he says. 'They have achieved all kinds of material comforts but now realize that it is not the be-all and end-all of life. They are missing something and look to spirituality. When they look to spirituality, they always turn to India for light and guidance.'

" 'The Americans', he adds, 'are very receptive

but they prefer a scientific approach to things. They are not satisfied with rituals and dogmas, and that is why the philosophy of the Radha Soami Faith appeals to them.' " (The Times of India)

I acknowledge with gratitude the great help received from various satsangis in the U.S.A. and Canada who have transcribed the questions and answers from the tapes and from our dear Brother, L. Tara Chand Aggarwal, retired District and Session Judge, who is the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Radha Soami Satsang Beas, in this stupendous task of arranging and re-arranging the questions and answers under various headings, in cutting and eliminating a good deal of the duplication and still trying to maintain the charm of the Master's beautifully expressive language. I cannot adequately thank him for the great pains he has taken. How unfortunate that the Holy Master's sweet tone of voice, His powerful though calm and loving manner of speaking, along with His graceful gestures cannot be reproduced! One has to hear Him in person to appreciate fully His exalted message.

(1966) Louise Hilger

1. ADDRESS GIVEN BY MAHARAJ CHARAN SINGH JI AT THE BILTMORE HOTEL, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA ON MAY 10, 1964

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity, first of all, to thank you one and all for the very warm and affectionate welcome that your Committee extended to me on your behalf yesterday. I also deeply appreciate the magnificent hospitality of this occasion which you have all so kindly come from far and near to participate. For me, personally, this event is one of considerable significance, not only for the honor being shown to me on a great continent to which I have been able to come for the first time, but more especially because I find myself today on that part of American soil which can claim to have the oldest association with the Dera. It was to the West Coast that Sant Mat first came in the first quarter of this century when someone, on behalf of Huzur Maharaj ji, our Great Master, initiated the first American. It is here that the Radha Soami philosophy in America slowly took root and where I think we have the highest concentration of American Satsangis. It is indeed a matter of both pleasure and privilege for me to be in the midst of so many of you and to have this event mark the beginning of what is going to be a fairly extensive tour of the United States. I bring you hearty Radha Soami greetings and good wishes of all the many hundreds of thousands of Satsangis in India.

My tour of the States is scheduled to last for about six weeks, of which about two weeks are allotted to California. I hope, during this period, to hold Group meetings and discussions at each of the three

Centers to be visited in this area—that is here in Los Angeles, in San Diego and in San Francisco—in accordance with the local programs drawn up by the Group Presidents and others in charge of the arrangements at these Centers. I would also like to meet as many individual sisters and brothers, couples or families as possible, either at the residence of my hosts or may be in their own homes. But time is very much of a limiting factor in my itinerary, particularly in relation to the long distances between places; some times even within each of the areas covered by a Group Center. I am sure Brother Sondhi will make every effort to accommodate the maximum number of Satsangis, especially those who have been unable to undertake a visit to the Dera. Nevertheless, some, whom I would very much like to meet in this manner, may have to be left out. I do hope that all those sisters and brothers whom I am unable to see personally will try to understand and appreciate my practical difficulties.

You may be sure that Sant Mat, as predicted by my Beloved, the Great Master, has a great and promising future for this wonderful country of yours. All the many remarkable material achievements that the American people can rightly claim are to their credit. Yet, with all this, you are beginning to realize that these have not made you really happy. Our pursuits are almost exclusively for worldly comforts and worldly possessions. The more we try to seek or run after them, the more frustrated and unhappy we become. When one is at the foot of a hill, one is always aspiring, almost impatiently, to reach the top, but on getting up there, feels utterly lost and looks down in despair. Now I find your countrymen in

much the same state, if I may say so. But, as I said, there is also now the realization of the futility of the worldly pursuits, a realization, after all, that perhaps their pursuit of happiness is in the wrong direction and that it is time for them to make the search for it within, in this "Temple of the Living God".

The soul is of the essence of the Lord. Unless it merges back into Him and is on the right Path leading to Him, the question of true happiness does not arise. To help seekers in this noble cause, please do not forget that we have, all of us, a great responsibility. We have to strive hard to be a living example of Sant Mat for them. We must rise above all sorts of petty differences and jealousies, work together in a spirit of cooperation and live in harmony and love with one another. Everybody needs love, perhaps some more, and the more you give the more it grows.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay my compliments to Brother Harvey Myers, who for several years has functioned here as the Representative of the Great Master and his Successors at Beas. He has worked hard and diligently, and, we may be sure, always in the best interests of everybody. He has our confidence and support, and will, I trust, continue to serve the California Sangat.

I thank you all once again for your great kindness, love and hospitality and assure you of our best consideration, if any of you would ever want to plan a visit to us at the Dera. It is your own Dera, where you would always be most welcome. Thank you.

2. IMPROMPTU TELEVISION INTERVIEW OF MAHARAJ CHARAN SINGH JI

ON MAY 28, 1964 at MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

(The Interviewer was a total stranger and a member of the Television staff who had heard about Maharaj Ji being in Minneapolis and contacted him at Col. Berg's residence, at which time Maharaj Ji refused to appear on Television, as he was leaving for an engagement at another place according to previous appointment, and his time was already fully booked. There the matter would have ended, but the Interviewer was quite persistent and again contacted Maharaj Ji at the next place he visited in Minneapolis along with Col. Berg, personally, and prevailed upon Maharaj Ji and his secretary, Air Marshal Kundan Sondhi along with Col. Berg to get into her car and proceed to the studio, where the following interview took place, quite unexpectedly. It will be remembered that Pundit Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, had just then passed away, and the news was received a day before the interview, while Maharaj Ji was in Minneapolis.)

Q. 1. I have seen your name in print. I have seen you listed as Charan Singh Maharaj Ji. What does this mean?

A. Yes, my name is Charan Singh, but in India "Maharaj Ji" is a title of respect for some holy men.

Q. Are you considered in India then to be a holy man?

A. Well, I cannot say whether I am holy or not, but that is how they address me.

Q. Is that why you are dressed in the way that you are dressed? Is this a symbol of your dress, part of the holy man?

A. No, this is our Indian national dress.

Q. That is just the national dress of India?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you tell me what you are considered? A spiritual leader in India?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you tell me something of your philosophy?

A. I represent in India, Radha Soami Satsang Beas, and we have centers here in many big cities of the United States. It is very difficult to explain in a few words the philosophy of Radha Soami Faith. We are not any particular religion, nor do we believe in conversion. To me, religion means something which unites one with the Lord. I believe that after a certain period we forget the real teachings of our religions and give more importance to rituals, ceremonies and dogmas of which we become a slave in course of time. Then, all we are left with in the name of religion is just converting people or collecting funds. To me spirituality at the base of every religion is the same. If with an unbiased mind we try to make a research—we may make a research in the teachings of any saint, from anywhere in the world—definitely we would find the same Truth preached by all of them. So, we are concerned with that spiritual Truth which is the common heritage of every religion, or rather of every human being. I try to explain these simple truths to the seekers.

Q. You have a center in Minneapolis, do you not?

A. Yes. That is why I am here, and Col. Berg represents us here in this place.

Q. If always, the Truth itself, is simple and as universal, why, then, are there so many different religious sects?

A. Saints may belong to any religion, any country; they may come at any time. They always preach the

same simple Truth; but unfortunately their followers, after they, the Saints, have left, interpret their teachings in their own way and try to bind them in some sort of organization. As a result they are left with just rituals and ceremonies and forget the real teachings of the Saint. Then, again, a Saint appears somewhere else and revives the same old teachings. The difficulty is that people generally do not try to make a thorough research in spirituality.

Q. I see in some of the literature about you, Sir, that you say that you are teaching God-Realization through self-realization. What do you mean by this?

A. God-Realization means the merging of the soul back into the Lord, and we can do that only when we get the release of our soul from our mind. Our soul and mind are knotted together. Unless—

Q. (Interrupting) They are 'not' together?

A. They are 'knotted' together. Unless the soul gets release from the mind, it is never pure; it can never merge back into the Lord. To *un*-knot this knotted-together soul and mind, means self-realization.

Q. How do you accomplish this—releasing your soul from your mind?

A. Well, it is by meditation. You see, this body is the temple of the Living God, and in this body—this point which is known as the third eye or single eye—this place is the seat of the soul and mind. From here all our thoughts are scattered into the world through the nine apertures of the body. We have to concentrate our consciousness back at the eye center. Unless we come to the eye center, collect our whole

attention there, we cannot realize the Lord. Our spiritual journey begins from this point upward.

Q. Is this—I have seen many Indian women, particularly, who have a spot on their forehead. Does this have anything to do with that?

A. Perhaps in the beginning that is what it was meant to indicate, but now it is just a symbol or a ritual or a custom, or may be a mere fashion.

Q. I see, I see. Sir, besides meditation, does diet have anything to do with your philosophy?

A. Yes. All devotees of this faith are vegetarian.

Q. You eat no meat?

A. Absolutely no meat. We just live on the vegetables and fruits.

Q. What about eggs and—?

A. We do not eat even eggs.

Q. Milk products or anything like that?

A. Yes, we take dairy products.

Q. Well, why is this?

A. This is due to the karma theory.

Q. To what?

A. Karma theory. If we kill somebody, we will be killed by him.

Q. I see.

A. So, in order to escape all that, we restrict ourselves to vegetarian diet.

Q. Ah huh—(pause). This is not really a new philosophy, is it?

A. No. This is not a new philosophy. It is as old as the creation of the world.

Q. Ah huh?

A. And every teacher will tell you the same thing; but after some time we generally forget these teachings.

Q. I am much impressed, Sir, with the aura of peace that seems to surround you, and complete—what would I say—almost satisfaction, contentment or something that is a mysterious quality about you. Is this true of most people who practise your philosophy?

A. Thank you. You see, unless we have peace within ourselves, we can never have peace outside. Everybody wants peace, but our search for peace is generally in worldly achievements or in worldly possessions. The more we run after these things, the more frustrated and unhappy we are becoming every day. If we try to search for that peace within ourselves, we get that peace. Then we will also find peace even around us.

Q. Mr. Singh, was the late Prime Minister Nehru a practiser of your philosophy?

A. No, I do not think so. He was a politician and of a very high quality, indeed. I do not know what he practised in his private life.

Q. He was certainly a very great man and well respected all around the world. You left India before his passing?

A. Yes. I left India on 25th April and it is really very sad news which I heard yesterday. It is sad for me and sad for the whole country—I think, perhaps, for the world. His personality was not confined only to India. He was an international figure. He was working very hard for peace.

Q. Personally, how do you think it is going to affect the country of India?

A. Well, I do not know. I am not a politician, but I hate to think of India without Nehru, our beloved Pundit Ji. He was the beloved of everybody in India. Irrespective of political ideologies, whether one agreed with him or not, every Indian almost worshiped him. They had confidence and faith in him.

Q. Is there a large following of your own religious sect, Sir? About how many would you say in India?

A. I think there are about six lakhs.

Q. Six what?

A. Lakhs.

Q. What does that mean?

A. Six hundred thousand.

Q. I see. (pause) It has been a great pleasure having you here in the Twin City area with us, Sir, and thank you so much for visiting with me on our show.

A. Thank you very much.

3. WHY THIS AND OTHER BOOKS

Q. 2. Master, I do not have the heart to send so many questions by letter. I have been informed that you are so busy that you do not have time to answer so many letters.

A. I can say one thing, when *Spiritual Gems* was written, Professor Lal was working with me as a Personal Secretary and he used to take care of all the foreign letters which I used to dictate to him. One day he told me that since most of the human problems seem to be the same everywhere, why not publish the gist of our letters in book form, so that people may find answers to their problems and doubts. They will know the answers to their questions and they will be spared the trouble of writing letters. I thought and pondered over it and came to the conclusion that it was a good idea, so decided to collect all of Maharaj Ji's available letters in answer to the letters sent to him from America and Europe as well as a few from India. We searched our records, and found those letters. Suddenly I felt that I should also publish Baba Ji Maharaj's letters in my possession,—a treasure given to me by my Beloved Great Master. That was why I was keeping them personally. I got them translated into English and put them in a book also, just with one idea that I would be saved from numerous letters that must be answered. But the result was that I got more letters, because those letters were so beautiful that more people became interested, and more satsangis had more questions.

Then it occurred to Miss Hilger that my letters also should be published, that Light on Sant Mat and whatever discourses I gave, should also be translated into English and a gist of them should be given in

book form, "so that people would know your teachings and also your views on their problems." That increased my correspondence still more. And then I published Sardar Bahadur Maharaj Ji's book, *Science of the Soul*, also for the same purpose, thinking that perhaps his disciples would like to know as to what his views were on those particular subjects. That means still more enquiries to be attended to and we are working day and night writing these books, just in the hope that some day perhaps American satsangis shall have no more questions to ask. Till yet we are quite unsuccessful. I do not mean that I do not want you to write to me. Please do not misunderstand me. You are most welcome to write any number of letters to me. I shall always be happy to attend to them, but naturally there will be a delay. People calculate that they have posted a letter on the first, it must have reached me on the sixth, on the seventh the reply will leave and by the thirteenth it will be received. And when they do not find that letter in the mail box on the thirteenth, they follow it with another one.

Sometimes I am on tour for twenty or thirty days and I have no long stop-overs. I do not even have time to look at these letters. I cannot even open the letters that are meant personally for me. I do not let anybody else open them, but sometimes it is twenty days before the letters catch up with me or I can open them, and I find among them three or four letters from the same person. After the tour I return to the Dera and we have to attend to the Bhandara. There are besides so many people and so many things to be attended to, that I do not know when to reply to those letters. But when they become so numerous, a

hundred, a hundred and fifty, sometimes, two hundred or so on the desk I slip early in the morning with my staff member in a car and go thirty or forty miles away to some spot on the roadside where I dictate the replies the whole day. When I read the letters on opening them, I mark with a red pencil the main questions to be answered, as I shall have no time to read the whole letter again. I just ask the one to whom I am dictating, "What are the main questions?" and I dictate the answers. He finds out for himself whether the writer is a brother or a sister, causing a mess of it at times in making in that hurriedness some sisters brothers and some brothers sisters.

It is clear from all this why my letters are quite delayed. I feel guilty always, but, on the other hand, my people in the Dera always accuse me of being more in America, even while in India, because every day it takes about three hours easily to take care of the letters. Those who have been to the Dera know it. I try to find time—morning, evening, night. It is always on my mind when there are more than forty or fifty letters. But I acknowledge almost every letter personally. I read personally, I go through it personally, but I have certain limitations. So it will be better if you refer to the books, and if you do not find the answer, you are most welcome to write. In the first edition of *Spiritual Gems* and *Light on Sant Mat* there were no indexes, but they were added in the second edition, so you can easily find the relevant answers, but I am afraid nobody has tried to make use of that index.

Q. 3. The average person is not capable of grasping all the ideas that you brought forward. It is not their fault. God made them

that way—if he would be able to—God would push him, would give him the idea of how to talk, what to say, and to grasp the idea. Lots of people sitting here would like to ask you a question but they do not know how, they do not understand it so well.

A. Brother, what I gather from their questions is not that they do not know the answers, nor that they do not read these books. Our books contain all the answers, but they just want me to say something, so they ask questions—nothing else. I know there are many questions about which they know much more than I do, but they just want me to speak, that is all.

Q. (Audience laughingly:) That is right, Maharaj Ji, we just want to hear your voice.

A. We have so many books written in detail that if you read these books and try to digest what is written in them, I wonder if there will be any questions left at all. The books are beautifully written from the Western point of view, from an intellectual point of view, from a creative mind's point of view, and we can know the answers to most of the questions just by reading and studying them. In fact, we always know the answers, and only that answer appeals to us, which we already know. Otherwise, the answer that we do not know will never appeal to us. I tell you, we always know the answer when we ask a question. It is in our subconscious. The answer is always there, but we only want a corroboration of that which we think is right, and we are happy when we find that it is right. That is all; otherwise all our books are full of answers.

Q. I read all the books, but there are certain people who can read them ten times and still would not know what they contain. They read and then believe in any stuff they are taught, because God did

not give them the spiritual know-how to grasp all these ideas.

A. (Smilingly) Well, brother, are you sure then that these people who do not grasp by reading will grasp by hearing? (Audience laughs.)

Q. 4. What is the name of that book? (Question refers to a small book which Maharaj Ji had just received from India and was holding in his hand.)

A. This is the preface to the English translation of *Gurumat Sidhant*, entitled *The Philosophy of the Masters*. This book was written originally by the Great Master in two huge volumes, in Punjabi, consisting of one thousand pages each. I will call it the *Enccylopedia of Sant Mat*. He explained it from every point of view. It was written especially for the Sikhs with the background of *Granth Sahib*, because when this movement of Radha Soami Faith and all that started in the Punjab, they were probably the most agitated, because Maharaj Ji used to explain from the Granth Sahib what Sant Mat is and they probably felt that he was giving a wrong interpretation to the teachings of the Granth Sahib. Maharaj Ji heard a lot of this misguided criticism and used to have a lot of discussions with the Sikhs. In certain organizations where he went, he used to have open opposition from them—openly, publicly, in the newspapers and all that. So he thought of writing a book explaining Sant Mat from all aspects, according to their own teachings. Therefore, the original, in Punjabi, has ninety-nine point nine per cent quotations from the *Granth Sahib* on every aspect of Sant Mat.

So *Gurmat Sidhant* (or *The Philosophy of the Masters*, in English) was a very detailed book by Huzur Maharaj Ji, and we have now published its

second edition. I know it took him about fifteen years to complete that book. Many people were there to help him. For example, Bhai Bishen Das Puri, who was a scholar in Punjabi. He was Ishwar Puri's grandfather. Also Ishwar's father and Professor Jagmohan Lal and so many others who worked and made a research on those subjects from the writings of other Saints as well as the *Granth Sahib*.

We have translated it into English for the benefit of the Westerners, and instead of two huge volumes, we shall print it in five or six volumes. We have not translated every word of it into English, we have eliminated many quotations from it, thus giving you the gist of the original work because, otherwise it would be a huge, voluminous work and you might not be able to read it. One volume is already with you, the second volume was in the press when I left. The third is still in the manuscript form and may have gone to the press, and others are being prepared for the press.

This little book is the preface. The preface runs into one hundred pages or so for each of the two original volumes, so I thought it would be useful to print the preface in a separate little book, one each for the two original volumes, as the preface itself is the gist of the whole Sant Mat. I have named it *My Submission* Part I and Part II.

4. SANT MAT, BUDDHISM, BIBLE, CHRISTIANITY, MIRACLES, GURU GRANTH SAHIB, EVERLASTING PEACE

Q. 5. How does Buddha's state of Nirvana, which definition has been given as that which never appears and therefore never disappearars, compare to God-Realization that you speak about?

A. Nirvana means release from birth and death, salvation. God-Realization or salvation are different terms to explain the same thing.

Q. But this is Nirvana versus Sansare? Nirvana is a state of being which does not even define such a thing as God or God-Realization?

A. I think Buddha's teachings are not properly explained. Buddha is nowhere quoted as having said that there is no God. He only said, why worry about God? Look to your karma. But the entire teaching of Buddha is based on the Karma Theory—a very rigid Karma Theory. What he said was to the effect 'why worry about God?' Look to your actions, what you are doing in this life.

Q. He never mentioned God.

A. No, but he has not said anywhere that there is no God. Actually, I say, we do not have the teachings of these Masters, as they really gave them. There is no book that Buddha wrote. There was no direct disciple of Buddha, who put his teachings down in a book. The same is true of the Bible, which came to be written much later by the disciples of Christ.

Q. But the Dhampadda is actually the book written during the time of Buddha?

A. It is very difficult to say. That is what we are

given to understand, but history does not prove that. Actually, these saints were not at all recognized in their lifetime. Nobody bothered about them.

Q. Buddha was, though?

A. Oh, no. Very few recognized him. He had hardly ten or twelve disciples in such a huge world. What does it mean? The saints were hardly recognized by their neighbors.

Q. Well, I was not there during those days, but I was under the impression that Buddha was very well recognized during his lifetime.

A. Of course you were not there. It was Ashoka who, afterwards, gave his teachings to the world. Monks, say about a hundred years after Buddha, thought of spreading his teachings.

Q. But Ashoka also met Buddha?

A. Oh, no. Apparently you are not a student of history. He came much later, some five or six hundred years later.

Q. Really?

A. Yes. Not to say of Buddha, you take the case of Christ. How many disciples did he have?

Q. Well, Christ had a poor following, I must admit.

A. With all his beautiful teachings, hardly twelve disciples. And some of the apostles did not have the privilege of being with him, though, of course, they were conversant with his philosophy. So, what could they do? People do not recognize such great souls in their lifetime, and later on they try to determine

what the teachings are, according to their own way of thinking. There is no history about these things.

Q. I do not think there is any contradiction in Buddha's teachings?

A. There are different schools. I mean the Buddhists have probably seventeen different schools.

Q. Yes, I understand that part, but insofar as Buddha's teachings, or his system of relieving suffering, working out one's karma, and to enter Nirvana in its essence and simplicity, I wonder if it is understood?

A. By Nirvana he means release of the soul from the mind. That is Nirvana. But why to get release of the soul from the mind? Just to merge back into the ocean. He does not mention about the ocean, but when water, by evaporation, leaves the dirt, whether it is conscious of the cloud or not, it will go back and merge into the cloud. Now, if the water in the dirt is told, "Leave the dirt, for you are not dirt, you are something else" and it leaves the dirt, though it is not told, at all, about its origin, the cloud, even then it will go back and merge into the cloud. Similarly, perhaps, the disciples were not plainly told about the Lord or about God. They were just told to look to their karmas and look to their Nirvana, to get release of their soul from the mind. But where then will the soul go? Again, surely, to its origin.

Q. 6. But you mention God, and if there is such a thing as you mention as God, is God subject to the law of cause and effect as much as man is?

A. Oh, no!

Q. Well, on another planet, still otherwise, you have given him a label of God, and on God there is also a limitation, just as much as it must be in Nirvana?

A. He has no limitation.

Q. "He" has, "He" has. Who is "He"?

A. Call it He or She, or One. You may give it any name, but He, God, the Lord, has no limitations. Read the Bible. It or He was before the creation. He has created the creation. This is subject to dissolution, but He is not subject to dissolution. Everything that we see is His own projection. It is very clear.

Q. 7. Maharaj Ji, it is my understanding, and I want to see what you say about this. It is my understanding, you know, that we have heard of so many books by Hermes Trismegistus, we have heard of all these books by Christ, by Buddha and all that. Now we know that Hermes Trismegistus was very probably a man of an illumined mind. So books written by them could be written by any thousands of people who had the illumined mind. Well, could we not say the same thing of Buddha? And say that all these stories about Buddha would actually be referring to people who had achieved a Buddhic consciousness, and had written it, or would you say—do they think in the East that he was a definite person, or is it just possible that different Masters and Saints and Gurus, who had achieved that Buddhic consciousness, had written this for their disciples and then down through the ages it comes down as the life of a man?

A. You think Buddha may be a myth? That is what you mean?

Q. Not a myth, exactly. But I mean that there were Masters and Gurus that had achieved this high state of consciousness, this Buddhic consciousness, so then whatever they wrote would be called sayings of Buddha?

A. I do not know. To be frank, I am not a student of history. I have not made much research in Buddhism. I have very little knowledge about Buddha's teachings. I do not know exactly.

Q. 8. Would you be kind enough to explain the difference between the modern Buddhist religion and Sant Mat?

A. Sant Mat, brother, is no religion at all; it is the teachings of the saints; and by saints is not meant a particular saint but all saints of the world. As I often say, the teachings of all the saints are the same. All the religions that we see have different types of rituals and ceremonies, but the essence of spirituality at the base of every religion is absolutely the same. It is not different, and saints are only concerned with the essence, the spirituality of the teachings. They are not concerned with the rituals and ceremonies.

Rituals and ceremonies generally come after the saints leave, when the organizations come and society takes over, when the priestly class and the professions come in. Then it becomes ritual and ceremony just to hold the masses, to hold the public; but the saints never bind us to any ritual and ceremony. They are concerned only with the real teachings of spirituality. Sant Mat means literally the teachings of the saints; not of any one particular saint. But whosoever has risen to that status, that height, his teachings are bound to be the same. They cannot be different, because if the Lord is one and resides within everyone of us, we must search for Him within the body. We cannot find Him outside the body, and naturally the path leading to the Lord cannot be different. It must be the same.

We human beings are all made alike, and if we have to search within, it is impossible and illogical to think that, physically alike as we all are, there is one way inside for Christians and another for Hindus and Sikhs. The Path is one though rituals or ceremonies may differ.

Buddha must have taught the same things which the other saints have taught us for attaining God-Realization, but with the passage of time, the real teachings were lost. Only organizations and groups and so many other things are left, and they, then, make their own interpretation of the teachings of Buddha, and for that matter, of all other Saints. That interpretation may be very different and far from the real teachings of Buddha or, as I find, of Christ or of Guru Nanak or of any other Saint. The real teachings are something very different from what is being told through the organizations and churches and temples.

If, with an unbiased mind, we try to make some research and go deep to the foundation of different religions, we will find the same teachings in all of them. There can be absolutely no difference. Buddha believed in Light and so did Christ. I often go to Buddhist temples and find their ritual to be absolutely the same as that in the churches or in the Hindu temples, or other temples. They have an everlasting light as they call it, a vigil light or candle. They always keep it lit. They do not let it go out, and that is a symbol to explain to us that light, that inner flame, inside here (the forehead). They also produce the sound of the conch while others use a bell, the sound of which is the same as that produced in the churches. The same light as is produced in the churches, as well as the same sound, is produced in the Sikh, Hindu or Jewish temples. These rituals are the same, and they denote, they explain to us the same teachings of the saints, but we have forgotten those teachings and have become slaves of these rituals. The symbolic meaning we do not understand. So Buddhism, as it is now, may have a different thing to tell us, may be

very different from the teachings of Sant Mat, as we call it. But the real teachings of Buddha cannot be different from those of Sant Mat, or of Christ. The real teachings of Christ are exactly the same as the teachings of Sant Mat. But as the teachings of Buddha or of Christ are given to us today, we may find vastly different interpretations because the real teachings have been lost and forgotten. Only symbols, rituals, dogmas and priests are left with us—meaningless relics, debris of ages.

The difficult problem with the Bible is that Christ himself never wrote it; otherwise we might have had a true interpretation of his teachings. It was most probably written by followers of the apostles and that too not at the same time when he was delivering his lectures—probably much after he had left, and some of the apostles, besides, were not so fortunate as to have come in personal contact with Christ. Through his disciples they got his teachings which you find in the Bible and these teachings are not complete. Most of them have been suppressed. The teachings of the apostles were written as though of Christ, and they too have come down to us today through so many translations that eighty or ninety per cent of them is lost in this process.

If the teachings had been written by Christ, or somebody had taken notes of his teachings, they would have been pure Sant Mat. Those teachings would have been far different from what we have today. For example, you have just heard my discourse. It is only ten minutes since you heard it. If you go to a room to put on paper what you have heard, probably you may be able to reproduce with your best intelligence and efforts only fifty per cent of what you have heard,

and fifty per cent will be your own wishful thinking, what you think had been said. Then if that discourse is to be translated into many languages, there will be left hardly twenty per cent of it.

The problem with the Bible is that nobody took notes at that time (Christ's teachings were given to the masses and some of them passed them on to others and so on). So many things were suppressed by the church and by interested peoples. Only that much is given to us which can keep us under their hold. As a result, there are so many missing links in the Bible. So, in order to understand the Bible, we have to make a very thorough research to enable us to know the real teachings of Christ. Just by reading the Bible, you will not know the real teachings of Christ. (There are so many missing links which you have to find in order to know his real teachings). But still, whatever is given to us today, if mystically we try to understand it, we definitely come to the conclusion that there is no difference between Sant Mat and the Bible.

The main theme explained in the Bible is that "I and the Father are One"; the soul has connections with the Lord, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me". We are separated from the Lord and we have got to merge back into the Lord. That Lord is in this body, which is referred to as "The temple of the living God". So, if the Lord is within us, we have naturally to make research to find the Lord within the body. Then he says, "Strait and narrow is the way" of finding the Lord within your body. "In my Father's house there are many mansions" means so many stages which we have to go through in order to reach our Home. Then he tells us, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you". There is a certain

door of our house (our body) on which we have to knock within the body, nothing outside, and that door must open before we can cross through these stages. And when that door opens what do we see? "Seek and ye shall find". There we have to seek the path leading to our home, and when we follow that path we reach our home. We find what we are seeking.

Christ tells us, "If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light". This does not mean that we have to take out one of our eyes. He is referring to the third eye which we have to open. Call it single eye or third eye, or whatever name you like. That eye is between and behind these two eyes. "We have to open that eye" means that we have to concentrate our attention here, at the eye center, in order to see that inner light.

Christ also refers to the Holy Ghost, to that 'Word' which cannot be described, which cannot be 'heard', physically, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Christ also referred to "living water" and "living bread". He said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" and, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." He also said, "Ye have ears and ye hear not. Ye have eyes and ye see not."

It all refers to that inner music, that Word or Logos, that Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit which cannot be seen with the physical eyes and cannot be heard with the physical ears. These are all mystic terms.

Christ says that if we hear the Holy Ghost (the Word, the Shabd), we get everlasting life. We are all dead because we have forgotten the Lord. As far as the world is concerned, we are living; but as far as the Lord is concerned, we are dead. When we get in touch with that Holy Ghost (or Audible Life Stream or Shabd or Nam or Word, or whatever name you give it) then we are resurrected from the dead. That is the real ressurrection, and it does not pertain to the physical body at all. It is the liberation of the soul from the clutches of the mind! That means that we have detached ourselves with the help of the Word and we are now "living" as far as the Lord is concerned, but "dead" as far as the world is concerned. Then we have real devotion and longing to go back to our Home. So from "death" we are brought to "life". We try to explain these things physically, outside, but they are all mystic terms.

When Christ said that we have to get that everlasting water, living water, he meant that nectar which is inside here (in the forehead), that water which will give us life eternal. That is the living water to which he referred. We try these things externally, in the form of rituals and take the external, physical water as "living water", whereas the reference is to something that cannot be seen or heard or tasted with the physical senses. It is all spiritual.

The same mystic terms are used in Sant Mat. Now we are in a better position to understand the teachings of Christ as compared to Sant Mat. We find

the same symbols and the same mystic terms in the teachings of the Eastern Saints. When we compare these teachings, we find that they are the same and there is absolutely no difference. But we have to fish here and there for the real teachings of Christ. We have to link so many things.

Q. 9. When Christ speaks about the camel going through the eye of the needle, would that not be the third eye?

A. That is right. 'Camel' means something heavy.* It symbolizes our attention, our thoughts which are scattered in the world. We have to concentrate our attention here, in the eye center. Now our consciousness is scattered in the whole world, through the nine apertures of the body; so our mind has become a 'camel'. We have to purify our mind before we can pass through the eye of the needle, and that means that we have to control our mind, concentrate it and subdue it. We have to withdraw our entire attention to this point (the eye center). Then only can it pierce through.

If you put a fine piece of cloth on a thorny bush and try to pull it off, you will tear the cloth. But if you remove the cloth from the thorns, one thorn after another, you can easily take off the cloth intact. In the same way, our attention is now scattered not only throughout the body, but throughout the whole world, from the nine apertures of the body. In the body, the center of the forehead is the place which is the seat of the soul and the mind knotted together. From here all our thoughts are scattered in the world through our eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth and

*Please see "Talks" by Shri Daryai Lal for another meaning of "Camel" as given therein by a Christian missionary: a thick cord or string.

the lower apertures. Howsoever you may enclose yourself in a dark room, still you find that you are not here, you are in the whole world. Your mind is scattered, so it has become a 'camel' How can you pass that camel through the needle's eye? We have to withdraw again from these nine apertures and put our attention into one channel. Then only it can pass through that eye, the third eye, the needle's eye. So we have to close the nine apertures and open the tenth, which is the single eye, the third eye or the eye of the needle.

These are all mystic terms which saints explain to us. You have read in the Bible where Christ said that he spoke in parables. He was right, still they crucified him. He spoke to the seekers in parables, which only the real seekers, not everybody, could understand. His teachings were not for everybody who came to hear him, but only for the few real seekers who were living in his lifetime. How can we understand now, without understanding the mystic meaning of his beautiful teachings?

Christ said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword". Saints do not come into this world to let us live in peace with the world which our mind has created for itself but to detach us from it and take us out of it; so they give us the sword of Nam or Shabd with which to cut asunder the roots of our attachment from the lower world to enable us to rise to the higher. Christ continued, "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law". Saints do not come to set us against each other. It means, "I have come to detach you from each other."

In translation we have lost the real meaning. When we interpret from one language to another and to still another, we lose the real meaning altogether. What Christ meant was that He came to detach men from all these things. Saints do not come to set one against the other. He simply meant, "I have not come to creat peace in this world; I have come only to take you away from this world. I have not come merely to reform this world". Such is the mission of saints always. They are not concerned with the workings of the world. They are concerned only with our souls, and they want simply to take us back to our Home, and do not bother about this world at all. So these are all mystic terms, which we have got to know and understand, before we can really understand the teachings of Christ or any other saint.

Recently I happened to read the modern Bible. Probably the British people have modernized it or something like that. Anyway, about two years ago I read a little of the Bible and now, on my tour, I have read the modern Bible. They say that they have straightened the English of the old version, but in doing so they have lost the meaning. In straightening the English idiom, they have lost the mystic meanings at many places in the Bible. Now after five or six hundred years, when this modern Bible becomes the old Bible, how much mysticism will be left in it? This is how havoc has been played with the Bible—from one language to another, and whosoever liked, suppressed many things. So just by reading the Bible casually, we cannot understand the teachings of Christ. We have to fish very, very deep for his whole teachings.

Q. 10. Maharaj Ji, if you say that Sant Mat and the teachings of

Christianity are the same, how would they interpret Christ's miracles, like of the fish?

A. What I personally feel is that all these miracles which are attributed to Christ are practically all mystic terms. They are not physical miracles. When he raised the "dead", that means that he awakened the devotion of the Lord in those people who had absolutely forgotten the Lord. He gave sight to the blind. We are all blind in this world, and he gave his followers the sight of that inner eye by which they could see the Lord within. That again refers to the single or the third eye, which has nothing to do with the physical eyes. He made the deaf hear. That means that he opened the inner ear of his followers, to enable them to hear that Sound within. But we try to explain these terms as of the outside physical world, so we call all these things miracles of curing physical ailments.

Saints do not come into this world to perform miracles, but miracles do happen sometimes with them. I do not say that they cannot. Saints are so kind-hearted and soft-hearted that sometimes they do perform them, but they always teach us, and themselves become a living example, how to submit to the Will of the Lord. If Christ's objective was to perform miracles, he would not have gone on the cross. He could have avoided it, but he wanted to show the world that we have to submit to the Will of the Lord. So most of the miracles which are attributed to various saints are actually attributed to them by their disciples to impress upon people the greatness of those saints; but they do not understand what is meant by greatness. The real greatness of a saint is his teachings, the love of the Lord which he inculcates in us, and not these petty miracles.

What was the rest of your question.

Q. His catching a lot of fish.

A. It may mean souls. You see, he may have caught many souls, attracted many souls to the Path. The word "fish" may have been a mystic term for soul. It is very difficult to say how much of what actually happened has been handed down to us, because these things must have been recorded with reference to certain contexts, and if some of that is omitted and only a portion is given to us, we cannot know until we make intensive research to find out what is missing.

Q. 11. Does the battle of Armageddon in the Bible refer to the battle of the mind—the last battle of the soul?

A. Sister, actually I do not know much about the Bible. I have read here and there, but mostly I have read Matthew, John and Luke. From what I have read, I find that about ninety-nine per cent of it tallies with the Sant Mat teachings. To be very frank, I do not know much about the Bible, as I have read only some passages and they practically all tally with Sant Mat teachings and are the means of explaining what Christ really meant, if we understand his mystic terms. So, just now, I cannot explain everything from the Bible.

Q. 12. Would Christianity, in the orthodox church which has done so much to confuse and divide the world in a repressive way, what would you feel was their need for Jesus when these teachings were already in this world?

A. Sister, it is not only Christianity which has done it, every religion does the same thing. I cannot accuse only Christianity. Every religion has, at a certain time, done the same thing as the Christians are doing.

The object of the coming of Christ was the same as the object of the coming of other saints into the world. The Lord always sends His sons to inculcate His devotion in the hearts of the true seekers. The world is never without saints. So Christ was sent also to perform the same mission in his lifetime.

Q. Did the other religions do it extensively, like Christianity?

A. Well, the Christians may be a little more modern or better organized. They may have a better economic position, a better purse, or they may have a better hold on the masses due to various reasons, but every organized religion wants to do the same thing. What have the Mohammedans done? They did it with the help of the sword. They converted half of the world in the Middle East just with the sword. Every religion is doing the same thing. Those religions that have not done it, probably they could not do it, still they want to do the same. So I do not accuse Christiantity. It is the human mind that is doing it. Everybody wants to do the same thing. Some people get the opportunity to do it while others do not; but the teachings of the saints are quite different from their practices.

Q. 13. Is your teaching in conflict with Christianity? I am new, you know.

A. As you have just heard in my discourse, no saint comes into the world to create any religion, or to divide us, or to bind us to any organization or any particular religion. Saints come only to teach us spirituality.

Q. 14. Then what about the first Commandment, Sir? "Thou shalt have no gods before me"?

A. Yes, there is only one God. We believe in that God and we worship that God.

Q. But you seem to imply that one must have a Master.

A. Yes, one must have a Master. Masters are sent by the same one God. The only difference is that they of old followed the instructions of the living Master of their time, and we are under the guidance of a Master of our own time. Perhaps you are a little confused: "Can there be any Master besides Christ", is perhaps what you exactly mean by your question—am I right?

Q. Well, yes. I, sort of believe in one God....

A. We all believe in one God.

Q. Then we should not even worship Christ?

A. We all believe in one God. The Master believes in that same God. We only need help, a living guide, a teacher, a Master, give it any name, just to return to the one God. Otherwise there is no sense in going to a Master, if we are not being led back to the Lord.

Q. It is just a quick way to make contact?

A. There is no question of a quick way. That seems to be the only way. If we believe that Christ was or is the only Master, we must also have some consideration for the people who came before Christ. Who was their Master? How could they go back to the Lord? The Lord could not be partial to those who lived during the life of Christ, and not show anybody else the way to come back to Him.

Q. I was not implying that. I think all the teachers had a place and had something to do?

A. Yes, the teachings of all the Saints are the same. There cannot be two different teachings. The Lord is One and He is within every one of us. We are all seeking Him within our own body. When our human structure is the same how can there be a different path for a Christian, for a Muslim or a Hindu in this same body? The path leading to the Lord is the same in every human being. Our interpretation may be wrong; our understanding may be wrong, but there cannot be two paths for those who seek Him within. For those who search for Him outside, there may be hundreds and thousands of paths. So there is absolutely no difference between the teachings of Christ and other saints. What do you mean by 'Christianity'? Perhaps the actual teachings of Christ may be a little different from the modern conception of Christianity.

Q. 15. In speaking of the Christian religion that Christ founded, is Sant Mat in conflict with Christianity?

A. The teachings of Christ are not different from Sant Mat. At least in whatever little of the Bible I have read or have been able to understand. I find exactly the same teachings as the teachings I understand from other saints. He refers to the same Light; he refers to the same Sound; he refers to the same God; he refers to the same Soul; he also refers to the body as the temple of the Living God; to the many mansions which we have to cross before we can reach our Home; to that single eye with which we have to see the Light; to the 'door' at which we have to knock and which has to be opened in order to get in. His teachings are exactly the same. If we do not understand his teachings or do not follow his teachings, it is we who are to be blamed, not he.

Q. 16. In the discourse, the ascended Master or Masters who have left the physical body were discussed. Christ would perhaps be classified as an ascended Master. Would you care to discuss ascended Masters?

A. What do you mean by ascended Masters?

Q. I am giving Christ as an example of one who has passed beyond this vale of tears and is assumed to be in another sphere?

A. As I understand his teachings, I find they are exactly the same as those of other Masters. I find no difference in their teachings, so, to me, he has the same status as the other Masters have.

Q. In other words, he would be adequate to serve for those who choose him rather than choosing a living Master?

A. No. He could help only those souls who came in contact with him while he was living. When Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world", he meant as long as he was in this world he was the Light of the world, for his disciples, those whom he initiated in his lifetime.

Q. He is reported to be sending messages back, by way of his embassies, which are being dispersed.

A. It is difficult to say whether the message comes from the mind of the recipient, or from the devil or the negative power, or from Christ. You can know only when you confirm it with him as to whether it is his message or whether only his name is being used. If such had been the teachings, the Will of God, then one Master in the whole world, in the very beginning, should have been sufficient for all times. I generally question those who think that Christ can serve as their Master now, and that messages can be received from him now, as to what about those souls who were on this earth before the time of Christ. Christ could

guide the seekers who were in this world and could contact him during his lifetime; but you know that the world was created thousands of years ago. Christ came only two thousand years ago. What about the souls of those who came before Christ? Did they not need a Master? Did they never have a Christ? Were they condemned forever, just because they did not exist in the time of Christ and could not contact him personally?

The Lord is not so unjust. He is Justice, Love and Mercy. He is fair and merciful to all. There is only one way to reach Him, and that is available to everyone, whether rich or poor, black or white, whether Christian, Mohammedan, Hindu or what not. It remains only for the Master who is living in the lifetime of an individual to point out the Way and put him on the Path as well as guide him all the way back to the Lord. So we cannot say that only those from Christ's time and onwards will be saved. Christ never said, "I also erase the sins of those people who were born before me". Nowhere will you find that in the Bible, old or new. So we have got to think about it. What about those souls who came before him?

Generally, the disciples of every Master are so much in love with him that they think that without him there could be no Master, and that he is the only Savior who has come into the world. But by doing so, they absolutely forget the teachings of that Master. Paradoxically, out of love for him, they act contrary to his teachings by insisting that he was and is the only Master; whereas the teachings of all the saints, including Christ, clearly indicate that we must have a living Master. But after the death of a saint, the

followers become the victims of dogmas, rituals and ceremonies. We should certainly honor and respect the saints of the past, but we cannot look to them for guidance and protection, as we are in the flesh and need some realized soul in the flesh to take us back to the Lord.

Jesus indicated that when he was on earth, people doubted him and had no faith in him, but when they beheld him within, they would have no questions, meaning that all their doubts would be removed. He consoled his disciples by saying, "Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come." They were not yet ready to follow him, but he promised to send them the Holy Ghost, the Shabd, the Comforter. He thus consoled them that as far as they were concerned, he was not actually leaving them, that he would be with them in his radiant form. Now they had doubts because he was still in the flesh; but when, after a little while they would behold him within in his radiant form, all doubts would vanish. And that concerned only those whom he initiated in his lifetime.

We should read the Sermon on the Mount very carefully, for there also Christ is consoling his disciples, telling them not to despair, indicating that he was not actually leaving them and that it was only the flesh that was leaving, but that he would always be with them. He told those whom he initiated that he would appear to them in his radiant form.

Q. That has no general application?

A. No. That applied only to the souls initiated by Christ in his lifetime, and the same applies

to any soul initiated by a saint in his lifetime.

Q. 17. There is another thing in the teachings of Christ, that of a missionary angle. Some people take that as literal?

A. That instruction he might have given to one whom he wanted to carry on his work.

Q. But it is misinterpreted?

A. That is always the case with the instructions of every saint. It does not apply only to Christ. Saints are generally not recognized in their own time. It happens with every saint, and whatever little I have analyzed the Bible—and I am nobody to comment—I feel that in his lifetime his teachings were not noted or written at all. They were passed from mouth to ear. People just heard him. For example, you have just heard the discourse and you hardly remember fifty per cent only fifteen minutes after you have heard what has been said. If you go to another room and try to write down what you have heard, how much would you have left? It would be perhaps thirty per cent of what you have heard and seventy per cent of what you think you have heard. And if you did not have the opportunity to hear it personally, but heard it later through someone else, and then you tried to explain to some other person what you have heard and he begins to put it on paper, hardly anything will be left of the original. Then if that teaching, which the third person has written, is translated into different languages, how much will be left? Besides this, some people who have ulterior motives suppress certain things which interfere with their own way of thinking. How much of the original will be left ultimately?

That is the fate of the Bible, as far as I can understand. Nobody noted down Christ's teachings at the time he spoke. They have just passed on what they understood, one to another, and then they wrote the book. Later it was translated into different languages. That is why it is not a continuous record of the whole of Sant Mat nor Christ's whole teachings. Here and there in the Bible you do find his teachings, but you have to link them to understand his real teachings. Many mystic things are missing. There are many mysteries, illustrated in parables, and you need a teacher to understand the parables. Jesus himself said that he spoke in parables. Those people were hunted and persecuted, so he had to explain to them in mystical terms. Now we need some mystic to explain to us what he meant. If the people of his own times, who heard him personally, did not understand him (or else they would not have crucified him), how are we to understand him now, after so many centuries, particularly when his real teachings are also not being given to us in their purest or complete form?

It is difficult to know the real teachings of Christ from the Bible; but still, here and there, we find that the mystical meanings are very clear. He explains to us that we have got to search for the Lord and he emphasizes that the Lord is within us, and the search is to be made within the body. He tells us that our body is the temple of the Living God and that there are many mansions in the Father's House. It is not only that you will find the Lord in the body, but you will have to pass through many stages and many mansions before you can reach Him. Christ says that we will have to knock at a certain door before it opens, and when that 'door' opens, we see Light.

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We have to hear the Sound, the Word, the Holy Ghost. We have to drink that Living Water, which will give us everlasting life. These are all mystical terms which we must understand before we understand his real teachings. So we cannot just read the Bible from one end to the other and know his teachings. We have to fish here and there and go very deep into the Bible to understand the real teachings. One phrase is sufficient to set us thinking what he wants us to understand. It is not from just easy reading like a novel, that we will know what he wants to tell us. That is why sometimes we are confused. Sometimes we do not understand what we are reading, but if we know the key, then whatever we read, the whole thing will be crystal clear to us.

And this is not the case only with the Bible. I know about the teachings of other Saints, who have written with their own hands. Not a word has been changed, yet their teachings are being misinterpreted—not rightly understood. Though the correct words are still there and in the original language, the basic concept has been changed by certain persons' own interpretations, for their selfish ends. Not to say of Christ, all saints have the same thing to tell us, but we want to lean back on the writings of past saints and want to corroborate. So they say, "All right, if you do not believe me, see your Scriptures. See if that is there." The saints try to explain the teachings from every angle but we have to go very deep to understand the teachings.

Q. In other words, we get off the track through our misinterpretation, so we always need a living Master here to keep us on the track?

A. That is what I am trying to expain.

Q. 17-A. I have often wondered about the meaning of "The meek shall inherit the earth."

A. That means that meekness and humility are essential qualities to go back to the Lord. Meekness truly means elimination of our ego, of our self-importance. This ego holds us down and does not let us merge into the Lord. When humility comes in its place we merge into the Lord and inherit the kingdom of heaven.

This ego is mostly the result of our attachment to things and objects of this world. Christ said that it is more likely for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. By 'a rich man' he did not mean a man of wealth, but one who is attached to the riches (things and objects) of this world. It means that those who are attached to worldly possessions and relationships cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. It is, in fact, these attachments that keep us away from the Lord and bring us back into this world again and again. In translations and interpretations by different men in authority much of the true teachings is always lost.

Q. 18. Master, am I to understand that following the teachings of Jesus is not sufficient?

A. The teachings of Jesus are absolutely sufficient for us, to take us back, provided we understand the real teachings and put them into practice. In order to understand them, we need a living Master. And when we understand them, we realize that a living Master is really needed.

Q. 19. Can you give us a little explanation as to what Christ meant when he said, "Let the dead bury the dead?"

A. What is the Church's explanation for it?

Q. Well, the way I have understood it through the years is that unless we are enlightened we are just as dead as those that we bury.

A. That is right. We are all dead, spiritually speaking. When the soul is released from the mind and senses, then we are alive and our consciousness is awakened. So we have to rise above the mind and senses, and that is resurrection which obviously has nothing to do with the physical body. Now we are dead as far as the Lord is concerned, but alive as far as the world is concerned. We have to die now as far as the world is concerned and to live as far as the Lord is concerned. That we can do here and now, while in the physical body. St. Paul also said, "I die daily", and that refers to the spiritual practice, in which we die daily as far as the world is concerned and become spiritually alive.

Q. 20. Master, what is your theory regarding healing of the sick?

A. If you are a doctor, do it. Help people.

Q. I mean, Jesus has so frequently, according to the Scriptures, healed the sick with the crack of the whip.

A. Brother, he has healed the sick souls. He did not make a practice of healing the physically diseased people. These are wrong interpretations. He has given eyes to the blind. That refers to the spiritual, inner sight, for we are all blind as long as we do not see the Lord, as you have just heard in the discourse.

Q. 21. Does God at any time send miraculous cures, or miraculous healing? As Jesus is said to have raised Lazarus from the dead?

A. Well, brother, I have told you that saints can do whatever they like. There is absolutely no restriction on them, but they generally do not like to break

the law of nature. All these miracles that we credit to the saints, generally, hardly five per cent of them have been performed by the saints as miracles. They may seem like miracles to us, but they are not. We make up stories to exaggerate them. From what I have read in the Bible, I do not think Christ performed as many physical miracles as people think he did. He gave eyes to the blind; ears to the deaf; power of speech to the dumb; but that does not pertain to the physical miracles. We are blind. In spite of having eyes, we do not see the Lord. He gave them inner eyes to see the Lord; inner ears to hear His music, the Word of God, the Shabd or Audible Life Stream. These are not physical miracles at all; they are spiritual miracles.

Saints are not jugglers, come to make miracles in this world. They do not try to perform miracles, but miracles do happen in their lives. I do not deny that. They are capable of performing all these miracles, because they are so tenderhearted and so much in love with humanity and with the Lord that they sometimes do interfere with our karmas. Then they take the burden on themselves, and we call these things miracles.

But that is not their purpose of coming into this world. We always give more importance to the miracles they perform and none at all to their teachings. Their main purpose of coming into this world is to teach spirituality and how to live a life of love and devotion. They want to give all of us that inner sight; they want to give us the power to hear within; and they offer us that living water (the nectar within), which can give us life forever. They want to take us back to the Lord. That is their main miracle, which

we try to confuse with these outside physical miracles, which is not their purpose at all.

As I said, miracles do happen in their lives. They can and do perform them. I am not discussing Christ in particular, because it is true of all the saints. Christ may have performed all those miracles. I do not deny that. But that was not his main purpose of coming into this world. And, in spite of Christ's performing all these miracles, do we not see the blind in this world now? Are there no diseased now? No lepers, no dumb or lame people now? Are not our hospitals filled with sick people? Saints do not come to cure our physical ailments, as that is not their mission in life.

I often give the example of a jail where there are many prisoners. One philanthropist comes and finds that these prisoners do not get good fresh water to drink, so he buys some good cold drinks for them. He is doing good to the prisoners. Another philanthropist comes, who perhaps has a little more money. He gives them good food. He is also doing good to them and trying to raise their standard of living. He is doing good according to his limited capacity. A third philanthropist comes and finds that winter is fast approaching and the prisoners do not have good clothing. He spends a little more money in trying to help them still more by giving them beautiful warm clothes, to save them from the coming severe winter. He also is doing good. Each philanthropist is doing his best, while the standard of living of every prisoner is just becoming higher and higher. But, all the same, they are still in the prison.

A fourth philanthropist comes, who has the key of that jail, and the power and authority to use it.

He opens the gate and sets all those prisoners free. He is the best philanthropist. In the same way, saints come into this world with the key, this world being a big jail that we are all in, each serving his own sentence according to his karma, fate or destiny, whatever you want to call it. So Saints just open the gate for us and set us free to go back to the Lord. Nothing can compare with their mercy and grace.

Saints do not come merely to improve the life of the prisoners. They do not come to raise our standard of living in this world. They come to set us free from this world and take us back to the Lord. That is their mission in this life; that is their purpose in this world. So we should always try to know the teachings of the Saints, the real mystics—the mystic way that the Lord wants us to follow: how to get out of this prison; how to get out of this world; how to go back to Him. We should try to seek their teachings in their books, and not give so much importance to where they were born; what were their miracles; what they did; who were their parents; whether they had a teacher or not. We should not get ourselves confused in history, in these matters; that is not the purpose of our lives.

We should always keep in view their real teaching, which is their purpose in coming into this world. They have to have a mother and a father; they have to be born in some country or another; they have to be governed by one ruler or another; so, we should not worry about these things at all. We should try to make a research of their real teachings, the purpose of their coming; for then we can make the best use of their coming; otherwise, we fail to do so.

Q. 22. The Bible says, "A merry heart is a good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones."

A. Sister, the Bible is full of mysticism, full of spirituality, but nobody tries to make a research about it. Christ very beautifully said that your prayer would never be accepted by the Lord if you do not first forgive everybody. As long as you have malice in your heart, or hatred against anybody, or illfeelings, your prayer will never be accepted by the Lord. If you want to pray to the Lord, first go and ask for forgiveness from the one you have injured. When he forgives you, then your prayer will be heard by the Lord. Only the pure-hearted can reach Him. And only a pure heart can be a merry heart; can be genuinely happy. When we are always thinking of cutting each other's throats, nation against nation, religion against religion, country against country, tribe against tribe, how can we have peace and be really happy or merry? We should not have hatred or malice towards each other. There should be no thought of revenge, even if we feel that we have been injured. Did not Jesus say that if someone smites you on one cheek you should turn the other? So we have to develop that love and devotion of the Lord within ourselves. Then we will follow these teachings automatically, which will give us peace within our self. And when we find peace within our self, we will have it all around us.

If such is everyone's approach, we can all, on a spiritual platform, become one; we are all one. But if you think you will be able to convert another nation to another ideology of living, you can never do it. If you think you can convert the whole world, you can never do it politically. There has never been one

ideology in this world, politically. Read the history of the world. So our endeavor is to try along the spiritual line. First we have to reform ourselves. If you try to pick the thorns of the world, you can never succeed, but if you put strong shoes on your feet, no thorns will bother you. Similarly, we can never solve the problems of this world, but we can always rise above the problems. The Saints just give us the "strong shoes", they give us the essence of spirituality to help us find peace within ourselves and radiate peace wherever we go. When we have joy within ourself, we find joy and beauty all around us; and if we do not have joy or peace or happiness within our self, even the most beautiful thing does not appeal to us. So we have to reform ourselves rather than reform the world.

Q. 23. I am a little confused as to if I should accept, and if it makes any difference if I do accept and consider that a man known as Jesus transformed his body in three days, and did not leave it back to deteriorate, so to speak. In other words, if this is an actuality, I am sure it has happened before to other Saints, possibly, and if so, what is the advantage of doing so?

A. I do not know. Whether Christ actually did it or not, that is also a moot point. You see, the thing is when we want to praise our leaders, we go beyond imagination and beyond limits just to give them praise. I do not know whether it is true or not that Christ took his body to heaven, as I am not a student of history. But whether he did or not, is immaterial. Saints can do it if they want to, but why should they do it? The body is just composed of the five tattwas, the five elements, and everybody has to leave the body, which can serve us only here in this world and not beyond.

Q. 24. Would you say the Granth Sahib is one of the closer books to the Sant Mat teachings?

A. The fortunate thing about the Granth Sahib is that it was written by the Gurus themselves, and it is being preserved to a word, with the modern generation. Nothing has been changed. It cannot be said that this was not the teaching of the Gurus, for they actually wrote that book. In their writings they have confirmed that this is their teaching. So that is something authentic, and the whole Granth Sahib teaches us the philosophy of the Saints (Sant Mat), and nothing else. So the teachings in the Granth Sahib are not only close to Sant Mat, they *are* Sant Mat.

Q. It is being misconstrued like other books, or is it still coming out in true form? Or are the priests themselves misconstruing it?

A. That they do everywhere. You will find the same is true of the Bible and other Scriptures. But actually, if with an unbiased mind you will make a research in the teachings of the Granth Sahib, you will come to the same point. What we are involved with is history, and that is never accurate, as nobody has made a research in it along that line. There is not a word in the Granth Sahib which cannot be explained and which is not true to the teachings of the Saints. The Granth Sahib is a collection of the writings of, I think, eighty-five Saints, and nothing else. Perhaps the writings of seven or eight of the Sikh Gurus and then the writings of about seventy-five other Saints are included in that book. So, it is a compilation of the sayings of all those Saints.

How did it come into being? What is the history of the Grath Sahib? Guru Nanak gave his own teachings in poetry, and he used to recite them out

of devotion and love. He never took up a pen and paper to write a book. Whenever he was in a mood of ecstasy and oneness with the Lord, his poetry just flowed out of him. And some saintly people noted down whatever he was saying. So his teachings eventually came into print. Similarly, the teachings of all these Saints, till the fifth Guru, came like this. But the written teachings of all the Gurus were scattered. Guru Nanak's teaching—his poetry, was taken away by his sons. His successor was not allowed to possess it. And so were the teachings—the poetry of the second Guru, taken away by his sons. The third Guru was not allowed to see them, and he had no access to them so none of the writings were available.

The fifth Guru collected the teachings of all the Gurus into one book. From the previous Gurus' descendants, from their friends, wherever he could lay hand on the teachings of his predecessors, he collected them and brought them into book form. Then he realized that if these teachings were given from his own Masters, probably the world would think that these teachings were something new and different from the teachings of the previous Masters of various castes and creeds, of previous times. So then he collected the teachings of all the Saints that were available to him, in different languages. The writings of those Saints who had lived eight to nine hundred years before Guru Nanak, were collected. All the teachings that he had collected of various Saints of various times and places, were the same as the teachings of Guru Nanak. He collected all of them and brought them into one book, called the Granth Sahib, and in that he left space for the writings of the ninth Guru. So the Granth Sahib is not only the teachings of the five

or six Gurus, but contains the teachings of about seventy-five other Saints also.

The object of compiling the Granth Sahib was to tell the world that whatever his Master had taught, the philosophy of God-Realization was nothing new, and that there was proof of it in the writings of earlier Saints. To prove that, he brought together their teachings into one book. Despite the fact that everything is there in black and white, people do not understand the teachings.

Q. 25. Maharaj Ji, recently here in Escondido we heard a high priest from the Parsees from Bombay talk. He was telling us about Hura Mazda, and apparently that was basic to all religions, many, many years ago. I bought one of their books and in it is stated that the last remnants of these ancient Persians went right down into the Punjab and into Bombay, there in India. And the rest of them, or the other religions, sort of took the main points and changed it around. Would Sant Mat possibly be one of these, through Guru Nanak? Would that be direct from the Hura Mazda?

A. No, sister. The Saints never take the teachings from another Saint and give another shape to it. I will tell you. Those people who travel on the Path and reach their destination, all of them have the same story to tell. Whether the Saint is born in the twentieth, or the eighteenth or nineteenth, or sixteenth or seventeenth century, in India or America, or any other country, he has the same story to tell. So, regardless of who has written the story of that Path, leading to the ultimate destination, the teachings will always be the same. There may be a difference in explaining, keeping in view the background of that particular nation, or particular country, or particular people. But, essentially, the teachings will be the same. The kernel will be the same.

Supposing from America you went to India, and whatever countries came in your way, whatever obstacles you had in your way, whatever formalities you had to go through, whatever difficulties you experienced, and whatever enjoyments you had in the way, you write all that in a book. Another person goes and also writes what he sees and experiences in a book. A third person goes and does the same. Whosoever has taken that route to India, the experiences will be the same, but there will be a little variation in description here and there. Some will give a little more importance to Bangkok, some will give more importance to Burma, others will give a little more importance to Hong Kong; but actually, they have to explain the same thing, leading to the destination. There cannot be two different basic explanations for those who have gone there.

So it is not that the other writer takes from the teachings of the one Saint and tries to make it his own religion. They have traveled the same path and they have told the same thing. After their departure, the people gave shape to those teachings in the form of religions, and they became the victims of organizations and such shells. If anyone with an unbiased mind will make a research, we will be told the same teachings. There cannot be two.

We have a lot of Parsees in our group from Bombay. In fact, in Beas we have a cosmopolitan Colony. There is hardly any country or any religion which is not represented, because we do not believe in any creeds, dogmas, rituals or ceremonies. We believe only in the teachings of the saints and in putting them into practice.

Q. 26. Master, you said that people always misinterpret the teachings. That seems so even when the Master is living, because I even hear Satsangis say that whatever happens to your karma, they take it up.

A. Yes, this happens even while the Master is living, so just imagine what happens when the Master departs! Sometimes a statement is made at one place and by the time it is repeated to several others at some distance it may be quite different from the original statement. This always happens when the person relating or interpreting allows his own self to come in. So generally, the teachings are a little misunderstood or not rightly explained, or suppressed. It always happens.

Recently when somebody visited Beas, he gave me a photostatic copy of some phase of a book on vegetarian diet. He says that they have found some papers in the Vatican in Rome, containing some secret passed from one person to another about Christ's teachings, that are very clear about the vegetarian diet—why we should have the vegetarian diet and all that. I shall send Mr. Replogle a copy of it when I go back to India. The photostatic copy was given to me by an American Satsangi. So many things have been suppressed from the Bible.

Q. 27. Maharaj Ji, could you briefly tell the story of the Audible Life Stream, the living force? For someone who is a seeker, a beginner on the path, what this Audible Life Stream is like?

A. Brother, do you want to know the gist of the teachings? Every saint has been telling us of the soul's relationship with the Lord. The soul is the essence of the Lord. We are separated from that Ocean and we have taken to the company of the mind,

and the mind is already a victim of the senses. Whatever karma the mind does, being a slave of the senses, the soul also has to pay, to reap the fruit of those karmas (actions). During our lifetime we do both, good deeds and bad deeds. Whether good or bad, the results of both types bring us back into this world, and we are brought back into that form in which we can best fulfill the results of all those karmas. Then, while we are fulfilling those karmas, we are also continually making new karma, and so we continue to come and go but always remain in this prison of 'eighty-four' (eight million, four hundred thousand species of life).

The human form is given to us to enable us to get out of this prison, the wheel of eighty-four, as we also call it, and go up and merge back into the Lord. He, whom we want to see and in whom we want to go back and merge, is nowhere outside. He is within us. Every Saint, every Master, has tried to explain to us that this body is the temple of the living God. Christ also referred to it as the temple of the living God. Guru Nanak called it *Hari Mandir*. *Hari* means Lord, *Mandir* means the place where the Lord resides. And many rishis and munis have referred to it as *Nar Naraini-Deh*, meaning this body in which the Lord is located or in which the Lord resides, and in which our soul can become the Lord again by merging back into Him. Every Saint has been teaching us this simple truth, that the Lord is within everyone of us. If He is within everyone of us, naturally we have got to seek Him within, we have got to make a research to go back to meet the Lord within the body. This body is a laboratory in which we have to make a research for reunion with Him.

Our spiritual journey starts from the soles of our feet and ends at the top of our head. In the body, the seat of the soul and mind knotted together is in the center behind our eyes. Some people call it *til*, some call it the door of our house, some have referred to it as the third or the single eye, as Christ has referred to it in the Bible. From here all our consciousness is scattered in the whole world through the nine apertures of the body, which are, the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth and the two lower outlets. Even being here, at the thinking center, we are not here, our thoughts are spread into the whole world. We are always thinking about something. Something is always moving about before our mind's eye. If you close your eyes, you are not here. Your mind is never still. Either you are thinking about your children, about your work, or about your business and what not; and you are contemplating on them in one form or another. So our entire consciousness has spread into the whole world. Unless we withdraw it to the eye center, we cannot start on our spiritual journey.

The first step is to withdraw our consciousness to the eye center. Christ mystically referrd to this process when he said, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you." The Lord is inside and we are outside. We have to knock from outside so that the door leading to our house may be opened. This 'knocking at the door of our house' consists in bringing back our consciousness to the eye center. When we bring it here, the door opens; the third eye or single eye is opened. Then it is stated in the Bible, "Seek and ye shall find". When the door opens, we seek the path leading to our Home. Once we are on that path, we find the

Lord for whom we were making our research. So, unless we withdraw by concentrating at the eye center, we cannot take to our spiritual path. We cannot complete the journey. The eye center being the seat of the soul and mind knotted together, it is from here that our mind is being pulled down by the senses. Our mind is fond of pleasures, so it always runs to the senses to seek pleasures. But, unless our mind gets something better than the sense pleasures, it will not cease dropping down.

Saints explain to us that here, at the eye center, is the Audible Life Stream, the Shabd, the Nad, the Nam, the Word. Saints have given different names to that Music, to that Silent Music or to that Power. Christ referred to it as the Word, the Logos, the Sound. And that Audible Life Stream or Word or Shabd or Nad or Logos, or Gurbani, whatever name you give it, that is within everyone of us at the eye center. Unless we withdraw to this point, we cannot be in touch with it. That is so fascinating, so charming, so tempting, that once we are attached to it, we are automatically detached from the senses.

Only attachment can create detachment within us. Detachment never creates any attachment within us. So, once we withdraw our consciousness, back to that Shabd or Word or Logos, attachment to that automatically detaches us from the senses, and we start on our spiritual journey.

Christ said, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." So when we open that single eye, when we open that third eye, that door of our house, of this temple, then we see that Light. With the help of that Light we have to travel on the path. With the help of that Sound, we have to know

the direction of our house. For example, if from your house in the evening you go out for a very long walk and while you are out it becomes pitch dark, you absolutely forget the direction of your house, to the right or to the left, in front or behind. You generally stand quietly in that darkness and try to hear some sort of sound coming from your house. It may be of your television, it may be the barking of dogs, it may be some people talking. With the help of that sound, you try to determine or know the direction of your house. After catching that sound and trying to know the direction of your house, another obstacle comes in your way, which is, the darkness. There may be another man's yard, there may be some bushes, there may be some lake, a forest or a pond, but if you have a light in your hand, then with the help of that light and the sound, you come back to your destination which you had lost.

Similarly, the Lord is within everyone of us, but we have absolutely forgotten the path leading back to Him. He has kept that Sound within us and He has kept that Light within us. With the help of that Sound we know the direction of the Lord's house and with the help of that Light we have to travel on the path leading to our Home. That is why sound and light are both mentioned in the Bible. These are the two fundamental things which are essential for us to go back to the Lord. So Christ said, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Now if we close our eyes, we see nothing but darkness inside; but when we open that single eye by withdrawing our consciousness to that eye center, then what do we see? Instead of darkness, we see Light within and we get real bliss and peace. We have to merge into

that Light and with the help of that Sound and Light we come back to our Home. Christ said, "In my Father's house are many mansions". The journey is not just straight, as we have to pass through many stages, with the help of that Sound and with the help of that Light, before we can go back to our own Home.

Such are not the teachings of Christ alone. Every Saint who has come from that Home, who has traveled back to that destination, has the same message to give, and the same teachings to impart. No Saint comes into this world to create a religion, to divide humans, to set one nation against another, to set one religion against another religion. They come only to show us the Way, that Path, which leads us back to our own Home. People generally, after the Saints go, not knowing what to do, make organizations, called religions. Then we become bigoted, we start hitting and back-biting one another, and the real teachings of the Saint are soon forgotten.

Every Saint has the same message to give, every Saint has the same teachings to explain to us, and whether they are in the East or whether they are in the West, it hardly makes any difference. It is only common logic that if the Lord is one and He is within everyone of us and we have to seek Him within our body, the path leading to that destination, to our Home, cannot be but one. It must be one. It is impossible even to think that for Christians there is one path leading to the Lord's house, and for a Hindu or a Sikh or a Muslim there is a different path leading to Him. There may be a difference in our interpretation, in our understanding, but there cannot be two paths leading to His house. If we seek Him within, we will find the same Path, the Path of Sound and Light.

But if we search for Him outside, we find that everybody has his own path, leading perhaps nowhere.

It is only on the spiritual basis, on the spiritual platform that we can come together and be near to each other. Then we experience real brotherhood and enjoy real peace and bliss. But if we are searching outside, if we are seeking Him in different directions, we are being driven away from each other. As I said, probably in one of the group meetings, the nearer we are to the Lord the nearer we are to each other. The more we are away from Him, the more we are being driven away from each other. So, in order to find peace even while living in this world of unrest, we have to make research within ourselves. We must have a spiritual outlook. The political, economic or social outlook can never give us peace. It may improve our physical environment, or improve our standard of living, but perhaps in the long run these things make us even more unhappy and frustrated.

Real peace and happiness we can get only from within ourselves. Unless we make an effort to seek that real peace within, we can never get it. The nearer we are towards our Home, towards our destination, towards the Lord, the more peace and happiness we will find within ourselves. The more we have wandered away from Him, the more frustrated and unhappy we become everyday. I think that this is the gist of the teachings. You may read the Bhagavadgita, you may read the Adi Granth, you may read the Bible, you may read the mystic works of the Muslim saints, you may read the teachings of any Saint and you will find the every Saint has the same message and the same thoughts and the same

thing to tell us to do. This, in a nutshell is, the teaching of the Saints.

While the same teachings are in the Bible and other holy scriptures, in most cases they have been obscured by rituals, ceremonies, creeds and dogmas introduced by the priestly classes and so, after a particular Saint departs, people just forget the teachings of that Saint. Under the sway of the priestly influences, they give more importance to the rituals and ceremonies and outside formalities. The real practice, how to seek the Lord within the body, they generally forget. Saints again come to remind us of the same path to the one God. So Sant Mat is no new faith, no new religion. It is just a science, so to say. It is just a practice, a method by which we have to develop our consciousness at the eye center and then travel on that spiritual path back to our Home, our Source, the Lord Himself.

Q. 28. I was just thinking that one of the problems as far as the Western people are concerned is to re-educate ourselves on the idea of healing being so important, and to go to the basic problem of getting on the inner path. Is that true?

A. That is right.

Q. 29. Is there a mystical interpretation that you can give us of Jesus' death, the resurrection, the ascension? How much emphasis is to be put upon that?

A. The mystical explanation is very clear. When the Saints leave the body, they do not leave their disciples, they do appear to their disciples. As you have read in the Bible to the effect, 'Now I am with you, you do not believe in me, but after a little while I shall leave this world, but then you shall see me again and you will have no questions, no doubts'. That means

the Saints leave the body but they do not leave their disciples. As long as the disciples see the Master in the flesh they have all sorts of doubts and questions, but when they behold Him inside they have no doubts or questions. So that means, when the Master leaves the body we should not be dejected, for he is always with us. And that applies only to the particular disciples who have been initiated by the Master living in his time. When the Saints leave the physical body they do not leave their disciples. They live with them, they are in them, and the disciples do see them. If Christ's disciples saw him after his crucifixion, they must have seen him inside, as they had seen him in the flesh, but in his radiant form. So that is the resurrection of Christ, as referred to in the Bible.

Q. And the ascension? The ascension of Christ? He was supposed to have made an ascension into heaven with his physical body?

A. That is not physical at all. I do not know much about the Bible, but that is not physical. What would be the use of the Saints' first leaving the body and then again physically appearing to the people? Why should they not then retain the body? Why should they go through crucifixion and all that?

Q. Well, why was he crucified? In a mystical sense?

A. Historically it is very difficult to say anything, because there are different versions, whether he was crucified at all or not. I do not know the historical facts about his whole life, but many Saints have been crucified. There is hardly any Saint who has not met the same fate. Many Gurus have been burned alive or martyred in other ways, because of the priestly

classes. The priests have made religion a profession and they cannot see the people going out of their hold on them. If you read the history of the different Saints in the Far East or Middle East, everywhere you will find the same treatment meted out to them. What happened to Christ is nothing new.

Q. The ascension then or the rising up into heaven, may have been the experiences inside?

A. That is right, by the disciples inside.

Q. They could see him?

A. They could see him as they saw him outside. As they had seen him outside, they must have seen him in his radiant form inside, merging into the lap of the Father. They must have told the other disciples that they saw Christ, and so others might have written that he was seen outside, in the physical body. There can be so many misunderstandings, and so many explanations can be given.

Q. 30. Do you think the crucifixion could also be a symbolism of what the disciples saw inside, about how they made the Master carry their karmas?

A. Masters definitely carry the karma of the disciples. I cannot exactly say whether it was a symbol or whether it was a historical fact, but what I can say is that this is what happens generally with Saints. I do not see anything new in this reference to Christ, as it is said of many Saints that they appear to their disciples after their departure. They appear to their disciples living thousands of miles away. So, there is no wonder that Christ appeared to his disciples after his death; rather, that is as it should have been.

Q. 31. Maharaj Ji, could you explain the difference between metaphysics, the Universal God, and Sant Mat?

A. The God of Sant Mat is the same universal God. Sant Mat is the Hindi term for the teachings of the Saints. It literally means the teachings of the Saints. It is no particular religion. The teachings of the Saints is simply that path which leads us back to the Lord. That is Sant Mat.

As I explained yesterday, the essence of every religion is absolutely the same. The basic fact of spirituality of every religion is the same. We have different rituals and different ceremonies, of course. These are always introduced by the priestly classes after the departure of the Founder, because after a certain period, the people forget the real teachings of the Saints and lose the essence. All that they pay attention to is just rituals and ceremonies and dogmas. However, that is not actually the teachings of the Saints. The teachings of the Saints are meant simply to lead us back to the Lord. Every Saint tries to tell us that there is one God, there cannot be two, and He has created the whole universe, and that God is within everyone of us. The human form is given to us just for the purpose of realizing the Lord within our own body. And we have to search for the Lord within us, because this body also is referred to by various Saints as the temple of the living God.

So, if the Lord resides within us, naturally the path leading to the Lord must be within us. If anything is lost in our house, we must search in the house to find it. If we start searching outside instead of inside, we cannot be successful in our search. If the Lord is within us, the path leading to the Lord must also be within us. We therefore have to search for

that path within ourselves. And unless we tread on that path, unless we make a research on that path, naturally we cannot be led to the Lord, our true Source or Home. It is clearly stated in the Bible that Christ also referred to this body as the temple of the living God. He also taught us to search within. He said, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you". We have to knock at the door of our house, our body, the door being the eye center and the knocking at the door is our meditation, as instructed by the Master at the time of Initiation. When our attention is fully concentrated at the 'door', it is opened for us and we travel on the path by means of Sound and Light, through "many mansions" in the Father's house and ultimately merge into the One God.

Q. 32. We were all trained in Western ideology and Christianity. Our understanding of Saints may be the same connotation that you put on an Indian Saint, but Jesus performed a lot of miracles and so did Saint Francis. Do you think they were transgressing or—?

A. I think I must boldly state that there is very poor research in the history of the Saints. (Here a lengthy explanation of the real mission of the Saints was given, as already quoted in one of the previous answers.)

Q. 33. Master, most of us have in our religion the ten Commandments, and the first commandment states that I am your Lord. I am one and you shall not make any images before me. I am trying to translate that from a different language. You probably know it in different wording. But I would like to know from you, are you in favor of all ten commandments? Are you familiar with the ten commandments?

A. Brother, these are all set principles or set rules as to what we should do and what we should not do. We will automatically know and practise all this when

there is devotion and love for the Lord within us. When the love and devotion of the Lord comes in us, all these good qualities are manifested in us like cream in the milk. Then we need not tell our mind, "You are not to kill, you are not to do this bad thing, you are not to tell a lie," for all that automatically will become a part of our life when we live according to the teachings of the Saints.

Q. But there are other human beings that are not so enlightened, and for their start it is very important?

A. It is good. All these things are just to guide us toward the Path. They are like cleaning the vessel, preparatory to putting something into it, and it is necessary for the vessel to be clean before putting anything into it. So, by merely trying to follow the ten Commandments without being on the Path we shall find the vessel still empty. We have to follow them *and* tread the Path, and by treading the Path we are automatically following the ten Commandments too.

Q. Yet, who gave them?

A. The Saints tell us; the Saints give us.

Q. We understand that God gave them.

A. Well, God sent the Saints. After all, God has never come into the world to write a book. The writings had to come through someone. Everything that we get through the Saints we get from God. It is very clear in the Bible where Jesus indicated, 'if you have seen me you have seen the Father; for I have seen the Father, so you have also seen the Father through me.' He also indicated, 'whatever I tell you is what my Father wants me to tell you, for of myself

I do nothing. The Father in me doeth all things.' Christ makes it very clear in the Bible, 'all that I am trying to give you is not my own, but comes from my Father.' So the Lord tells us in this way. He gives us instructions through His Saints, who have seen Him, who have merged back into Him and who therefore know His Will. The Lord has given us these Commandments. Whatever He gives, He gives us through the Masters (who are always Saints). He will always give His teachings through some human being, through His human Incarnation.

Q. I want to know why you doubt that He did not give them?

A. No, I do not doubt. I say that all the teachings of the Saints are given by the Lord through His Saints. The ten commandments are also teachings of the Saints. So, whatever the teachings of the Saints are, they are given by the Lord through the Masters.

Q. It is in the Old Testament that the ten Commandments were given to Moses in order to keep the people in line, these very primitive people?

A. So they have come through Moses. They were given to Moses for us, so we have received them through Moses. That is what I am trying to say. All the teachings of the Lord, will come to us only through the Saints.

Q. 34. An image of another God, for instance, there are several gods in our five names?

A. No, they are not gods. You can call them certain powers inside. As regards Moses, he makes it very clear that you should not worship anybody but the One Lord. Everyone's ultimate destination is

that One God. All teachings are always given keeping in view the times and the people to whom these are given. In the time of Moses people were worshiping many idols and images. Therefore Moses said that there is one God and only He is to be worshiped, He did not want to eliminate the Masters. Masters do not show their identity to be different from that of the Lord at all. They say, "I and the Father are one. The Father is in me and I am in the Father." So the Lord Himself establishes the contact between the soul and Himself through the Masters.

Q. But this image of yours? I mean no disrespect to you. I love you very much.

A. I understand your point, but now the question is—

Q. But I do not want to be misled. When it is one Lord and you are my very—?

A. I will tell you now what is the image of the Lord.

Q. It is the physical image?

A. It is not the body. Our real Master is the Word Logos, Shabd, Nam, the Audible Life Stream or whatever name you give it. The body we need in order to explain certain things, and after the Saints leave the body it does not mean that they do not remain our Masters. Still they are Masters. If the body were the Master, then how can he remain our Master after he has left the body? The body is not the Master. The Master is that Power, that Shabd, manifested in human form; but the form itself is not that Power or Shabd, which is the real Master. Through the body we are in touch with the Shabd. Masters are nothing but the waves of the ocean of the Lord. The relation-

ship of the Master and the Lord is the relationship of the wave with the ocean. Waves come from the ocean and merge back into the ocean. Wave and ocean are one. I and the Father are one. Christ does not say that his image is different from the Father. He tries to explain that Saints are the waves of the same ocean; the Saints and the Lord are one.

Q. We are all little awakened waves?

A. Yes, that is right.

5. DAYAL, GOD, RADHA SOAMI, SAT PURUSH

Q. 35. What is the name of the Supreme Being?

A. Give Him any name. Call Him God if you like. After all, the Lord who is remembered by so many names really has no name. He is also called "The Nameless One", and His abode is also known as "The Nameless Region".

The relationship of mother and child is that of love, and the mother expresses her love by using different names. But it is the love and not the names which forms the link between the mother and the child. All these words are just expressions of the mother's love. She may call him by any name or by a hundred names. The link is love, the blood.

Similarly, you may call the Lord by any name. We have so many countries, and every country has so many languages. In one laguage alone we remember Him by different names. Every name is good. Out of love and devotion you may call Him by any name. It is the love and devotion that count, and not the name. You can give Him any name, it makes no difference.

Q. 36. Maharaj Ji, could you give a concept of the Lord? It is such a wise one, you know, and difficult for all of us. Could you expound that in some way?

A. You mean concept from that point of view as to what He looks like?

Q. Yes. He is omniscient and so on?

A. He is a Power. Give it any name. We cannot even say it is power. We cannot say He is a person. It is difficult to describe Him. I think it is for us to

know Him rather than to describe Him. We all try to think with our own limited intellect what He would be like. What are *we*? Have we ever thought about ourselves? This body, of course, is comprised of the five elements, but there is something in the body which keeps it going, and that is the soul. The body is composed of earth, water, fire, air and ether. When the soul leaves the body, all these five elements decompose or merge back into their own origin. When the soul is in the body, we are alive, moving about, doing everything that you see. What is the concept of the soul? We have seen many people dying. Have we seen or have we any witness who has ever seen anything going out of a body at the time of death? We have no concept of the soul, and that means we have no concept of ourselves. Then how can we have a concept of the Lord?

The concept that we have of ourselves should be the same as our concept of the Lord. The Lord Himself gives His devotion within us. He gives His own concept. He Himself is within us. I do not think we can, by words, explain that, but intuitively we know it is the Lord. It cannot be explained logically that He is One. He exists. He is in everyone of us and we are part and parcel of Him. We have come from Him and we are trying hard to go up and merge back into Him. This is the natural inclination in our soul towards God. He has put that natural inclination within everyone. And that natural inclination is compelling us, working within us towards Him. Without it we would never even think about the Lord. He, Himself implants in us His devotion or His yearning or His longing for Himself. So it is very difficult to describe the real concept.

Q. 37. I am a little bit confused. Do I understand that you speak of God as a separate entity, not dwelling within us, or someone that we pray to on the outside? My thought has always been that God lives within us?

A. God is within everything in this universe. He is within us. Yet, though within us, He is still away from us. So we have to remove that barrier of 'awayness' from us. He is within us. When we realize Him within our self, we will find the Lord everywhere. But unless we find Him within, we will never find Him without. God is not to be found outside. He is within us, but we do not see Him within ourselves. We have got to remove this veil of ignorance which is between our soul and the Lord. The soul is within the body; the Lord is within the body. Yet, the soul does not see the Lord. We have a veil or a barrier of mind between the soul and the Lord. We have to remove this ego, this mind, which is the obstacle in the way. Then only can the soul see the Lord within, and when we see the Lord within ourselves, wherever we look, we will see nothing but the Lord. That is what I was trying to explain by saying that the nearer we are to the Lord, the nearer we are to each other. The more away we are from the Lord, the more we find ourselves away from each other. We cannot come together on any political or economic or social platform. At least, history does not encourage us. Only on a spiritual platform can we all come together. We are together. We are one. We can still become one. So when we realize Him within, wherever we look we will find nothing but the Lord.

Of course, He is within us. This body is the temple of the living God. Christ said, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light". Unless

we open that inner or single eye, unless we see that light, unless we merge into that light, unless we live in that light this veil of ignorance cannot be removed from within us. We have got to remove that barrier by opening that eye and seeing that light within. Then only can we get this wisdom. Then only can we live in peace with ourselves and we will have the atmosphere of peace around us. When there is peace within our body, we radiate peace all around us.

Q. 38. I have heard it said that in the East they often say that God is nearer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet, and that He is nearer than your jugular vein. Why does this paradox exist that God is so difficult to obtain?

A. Due to the veil of ego. The Lord is within everyone of us and the Lord is everywhere in this world. There is nothing which is without Him. Yet we do not see Him because there is a veil of ego between us and the Lord. That darkness, that illusion, has to be removed. When that thing is removed, only then, wherever we look we will see Him. Then we realize Him. Then we feel Him everywhere. But only when the ego is removed. Christ said, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light". That means that light is within everyone of us. Our body is full of light, but we do not see the light. Christ also said, "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not". If that light is within everyone of us, why do we not see that light? Why do we see nothing but darkness when we close our eyes? Because there are certain obstacles in our way and they prevent us from seeing that light. Unless we remove those obstacles, those barriers, we cannot see that light. We

have to open that single eye, that eye within to see that light of the Lord, the radiance of the Lord. So, unless we are bathed in His radiance, how can we be with the Lord? Nothing comes from outside. Everything is within.

Q. 39. In *Sar Bachan* and *Path of the Masters* one reads about the various deities that one must meet on the way up to Sat Purush. Are these deities also attempting to return to the source whence they have come?

A. No. Certain deities have certain functions to stop you in the way. They are the agents of Kal, the tricks of the mind. You have read in the Bible that Christ also had the same experience inside when he said to Satan, "Get thee hence, Satan". Certain obstacles do come in our way, we have to cross them, and we need the help of a Master to cross those barriers.

Q. Are these deities souls, which have originated from the same source?

A. Yes. Everything is soul, so to say. The whole creation is His creation. They are there for a certain object or purpose. He knows best.

Q. They have no desire to return to Him at all?

A. You think everybody has a desire to go back Home in this life? You will find that in this world very few people have really a desire to go back to the Lord. Mostly we worship the Lord, and we want to meet Him, not because we have love for Him, but because we are unhappy without Him. We want to escape from situations. We have become miserable in this world or we have certain longings and desires which we think only the Lord can fulfill for us. We

worship Him, not for His sake, but for the sake of His gifts. Very few people have real love for Him. We love people, we love objects of the world. We want the Lord to fulfill our desires, to give us those things. We think that if we do not worship Him, perhaps we will lose in business, perhaps we will lose in our love affairs, perhaps we will not be honored in our society, so we worship Him. These are very strange motives for worshiping Him. Actually, we should worship Him because we want to go back and merge into Him. The real longing, the real devotion, the real faith in Him should be the basis for our worship.

Some people worship snakes, not because they love the snakes, but because they want to avoid their bite. They worship a snake out of fear of its poison. Similarly, many of us worship the Lord from that point of view, out of fear that if we do not worship Him, perhaps we will lose a son or some near and dear one, or perhaps we will lose our health, fame, honor, business or wealth, or with a desire to gain these things. God is not cruel. Even if you do not worship Him, He will not make you lose anything. Perhaps He will give you much more. But we do want to worship Him, to meet Him, and to go back and merge into Him. So, I often say the basis of religion is love, not fear. You should never worship the Lord out of fear, but out of love.

6. MEDITATION

Q. 40. We are asked to put in two and one-half hours of meditation daily. If in our trials we are not able to do so, I understand we do not fulfill our mission. Is that right?

A. You see, we have twenty-four hours in a day, so at least we should try to devote one-tenth of our time to the Lord's devotion. We should not feel guilty if we cannot devote the full two and one-half hours. In the beginning it is very difficult to sit in meditation for even one hour at a stretch. We should start slowly and gradually, and try to increase the time to this extent. And if we miss sometime, we should not feel guilty about it. The object is that we should try to be regular and punctual. We should try to devote at least that much time to meditation; but then it depends upon the circumstances of the individuals. That is our endeavor, that is what we should try to do. We should keep that aim in our view. Try for it. If we cannot do it in one sitting we can divide it into two sittings or three sittings, but slowly and slowly we should try to bring it to only one sitting. However, that needs practice, and the time is increased by and by.

Q. 41. Is it not best to do the meditation at the end of the day, when the work is finished, before going to sleep?

A. Any time is good for meditation. Every time devoted to meditation is to your credit and you should make the best use of that time. But early morning hours have certain advantages for this purpose, which other times do not have. In such a big city, at least in the early morning, there is quiet and calmness in the streets. Your body is fresh and you have forgotten all that passed in the previous

day. There is no disturbance in the house, and you do not have a knock on your door from any guest or relative. You can very easily and quietly give that time in the morning to your meditation. If you try to devote that time in the evening, in the first place you are tired after the whole day's work and are likely to go to sleep during meditation. Also, at that time, all that has happened with you throughout the whole day, will come before you like on a cinema screen. If you could attain concentration in the morning within one hour, perhaps, in the evening, you will need four hours to do it, because during the whole day your mind has been spinning around. But when we get up in the morning, we are refreshed, have forgotten the incidents of the past, and naturally have a tendency to concentrate. So we find concentration much easier in the morning. But if one cannot find time in the morning, one may give time in the evening. Whatever time we can find for meditation is a good time.

Q. The time is best if the mind does not wander? Is that—?

A. Naturally, the object of meditation is to concentrate the mind. So if we start in the morning, it is easier to concentrate than in the evening. From that point of view only, the morning hours are selected. Otherwise, you can select according to your convenience.

Q. 42. We are very impatient in this country. Everything is hard for us. We try to be kind. In business, people complain because they have no apprentices these days They will not serve two weeks. They want to be journeymen. So it is very hard to concentrate.

A. It is a life-long struggle.

Q. Is it harder here, do you think, for us than it would be in India, or—?

A. No. I do not think so. I think, practically, human beings are the same everywhere. They have their own problems, you have your own problems. Probably you are tired, because you have too much; they are tired because they have too little. The problem is the same.

Q. 43. Is there something we can do to help us, in other words, is there something we can do or should do when we actually get to bed and meditate?

A. You mean to say, to keep awake during meditation? Or—?

Q. No, at night. In other words, to cure insomnia?
(another interrupts).
Q. No, no. It has nothing to do with insomnia. I am talking about going to bed to go to sleep. Should we repeat the names or should we concentrate the attention here?

A. I follow your point. While going to bed if we, keeping our attention here (at the eye center), do the Simran, the first thing is there will not be any insomnia. You go to sleep at once. Second, you will have good dreams, and the third advantage is when you get up in the morning for meditation your thoughts will not be scattered; it will be easier to concentrate and to be in touch with the Sound. So it is always best to do Simran while going to sleep.

Q. 44. In meditation, for your image, we should not concentrate on a picture. What should we concentrate on?

A. By picture, you mean photo? No. We should never try to contemplate on the photo. We should

contemplate, if we have seen the Master, on the form of the Master. Otherwise, we should just keep our attention here (between the eyebrows) in the darkness, and try to do the repetition of the five holy Names, the Simran.

Q. 45. Sometimes in meditation I have a problem. Perhaps it is wrong, but my mind tries to go every place and I try to still it, so I put your photo, your picture, image, to still my mind. Is that wrong?

A. We should never contemplate on a photo.

Q. I mean this: You have to keep your mind from wandering?

A. That is right, but not by contemplating on a photo. There is definitely an advantage in contemplating on the form of the Master if we have seen him, but if we have never seen him the next best thing is just to keep the attention here (between the eyebrows) and do the Simran, the repetition of the five Holy Names.

Q. 46. It is mentioned in our talks among satsangis sometimes that we do the work, and the grace comes. Sometimes there seems to be confusion between the grace and the effort. Is it not that we should always make the effort? If I put in the effort I will get the grace; the more effort the more grace?

A. That is right. The more the effort, the more grace we receive. But only through His grace will we be able to put forth the effort. Without His grace, we will never even think about the Lord. Without His grace, we will never find ourselves on the Path. Without His grace, we will never contact a Master. Without His grace we will never be able to devote time to meditation. Everything comes through His grace. But we should not think that only when His

grace comes will we give time to meditation. Our duty is to be sincere in our efforts to meditate. When He wants to give His grace to us, He will definitely do so. For instance, if we have a maid servant working in our house and she works honestly and sincerely, we are so pleased that we want to give her a bonus. So when we are working in the Name of the Lord, out of devotion to Him, He is not unmindful of what we are doing. He will definitely reward us for what we are doing. But supposing a beggar comes to your door and asks you to first assure him that you are going to give him alms, before he asks for it, nobody will bother about him. It is his duty to knock at the door, to beg, to ask. It is for the owner of the house to give or not to give. But when he really asks, he really gets. We cannot put the cart before the horse. So we have to beg. We have to put in the effort. Then the Lord will shower His grace.

Q. 47. Will a satsangi make it in four lifetimes, regardless? I hope?

A. Well, sister, why think at all of four lives? Why not in one life? (Laughter).

Q. 48. Attachments?

A. Yes, our attachments bring us back again and again into this world. If we overcome that, we do not need another birth at all. Even if we have not made our way upwards and have not made much progress inside, if we are not attached to anything in this world, nothing can bring us back. We will then go to some region inside from where we can work our way up.

Q. Then I will not have to come back if I do not particularly want anything here? You have to want something here in order to come back?

A. That is right. Only the meditation will take us back to the Lord, but if we are detached from the world, we will at least be saved from taking another birth here. We will be put in some intervening stage from which we can work our way up to the last stage. But if we have very strong attachments here, even if we are regularly meditating and making some progress inside, we are bound to come back to clear those attachments; because, actually, it is attachments that bring us back. However, through meditation, slowly and gradually, we do get detached. And when we have no strong bonds left in the world, naturally there is nothing to pull us back.

Q. Do we know when we are not attached?

A. It is very difficult to analyze when we are detached. Sometimes we feel we are, and at another time we feel we are absolutely attached. But slowly and slowly we come to a state when attachments do not bother us much. We are in them but we do not feel much concerned. You can say that you are attached when you start missing something, when you start wanting that thing, or missing a person, place or thing. That, in fact, is an attachment. On the contrary if you do not get it, and you do not bother about it, that is a sort of detachment. Detachment is achieved by meditation,because attachment to Shabd or Nam automatically detaches us from the world. The mind is fond of sensual pleasures, and unless it gets some better pleasures than the sensual pleasures, it does not leave the senses. So when

we withdraw our consciousness away from the lower centers, up to the thinking center (pointing between the eyebrows) and attach it to Shabd or Nam inside, then that attachment automatically detaches us from the world, from the senses and the pleasures of the senses. If we are thus detached, there is nothing to bring us back into this world. Why then think about four births?

Q. 49. Master, when we know that this is the right path and we have the faith and yet there is no love in our heart, how shall we go about it?

A. Sister, if you are attending to your meditation, love will come automatically. You do not have to work for love. It comes when it comes. Even in worldly love, you know, if you analyze yourself, you do not work for it. God gives this gift, and it just comes.

Q. By the grace of the Master?

A. When God wants you to love Him, He will give you that love; but it comes by meditation, as instructed by the living Master.

Q. 50. Maharaj Ji, meeting the Lord in every other sense other than Sant Mat infers a spiritual insight?

A. Why 'other than Sant Mat'? That too requires spiritual insight. Why not? How else can we see the Lord except through spiritual insight, through that inner eye, the single or third eye? That is spiritual insight, when we have opened that inner eye, and it is only with the inner eye that we can see the Lord. He cannot be seen with the physical eyes.

Q. 51. Sir, is there an assurance of meeting the Lord and going Home in one life, or four lives?

A. Why limit ourselves? Why think about four lives? Why not try to do it in one life? We should do our best to achieve our destination in one lifetime. If we do not succeed in this life, the Lord will give us another life, and two or three more if necessary, but the assurance is there that when we are trying sincerely to meet Him, we will definitely meet Him, and every life will be better and more conducive to our spiritual progress than the previous one.

6. (i) POSTURE, CONCENTRATION, SOUND CURRENT, HATHA YOGA, RAJA YOGA, PRANAYAM, ASCETIC PRACTICES

Q. 52. What qualifies as meditation? Does spiritual reading and then thinking on the truths represented by the writings—does that qualify as part of the meditation?

A. No. Meditation is giving proper time to the practice as taught by the Masters. But all the other things help us in preparation for meditation. If we read Sant Mat literature it helps to remove our doubts; it creates in us devotion and faith, and builds that atmosphere of meditation around us; it helps in that way. It is a means and not the end in itself. The real meditation is the time that we devote to our usual daily practice. That is real meditation.

All of these things definitely help us. They lead towards this thing, as does also the seva (service), as I explained earlier in the morning. But the main thing is that we should have no doubts in us. We should sit for meditation with an absolutely relaxed mind, and not with any excitement or any doubts in us. And all these group meetings, the reading of the literature and getting our doubts cleared, all help us to build that atmosphere of meditation around us.

Q. 53. Maharaj Ji, to many of the questions we ask we can find the answers in the literature. What can we satsangis in America do to propel on our spiritual path? What do we need here in America to help us on our spiritual path?

A. You are right, brother. There is hardly any question which I have answered since I came here, to which an answer cannot be found in the books. Rather, they are answered in the books in a

much more elaborate way. They have been written, and I am speaking. That is the only difference. But I have nothing particular for Americans to do. The meditation is the same, but some people have different circumstances, different environments where they have been placed. Meditation is not different for Americans or for others. Some people have a greater instinct of possession, they are more possessive. They have to realize that and rise above such things. As I said this morning, like a spider we weave our own web and soon we find that the web is complete, and we are caught in it. We are imprisoned in a net of our own making and cannot get out of it. We create desires and cravings and work hard for the material achievements and possessions, and when we get them ultimately, we find that we are being possessed by them. We have become prisoners of them. That is the way I find Americans today.

These things of the world are meant for our use; we are not meant for their use. We should possess them; they should not possess us. What I feel, from what I have been able to see, the very objects of possession are possessing us now. We have become so much their slave that we have forgotten the object of our birth, the object of our coming into human form. We have lost the end or goal and have become involved in the means. We have to rise above these things. We have to realize that these things are meant for us; we are not meant for them. All these scientific inventions are for our convenience, to have more leisure, to enjoy ourselves and be happy. If we cannot find leisure and happiness as a result of all these scientific achievements which are today to our credit, I think our purpose in achieving them is no good; of no use at

all. We have to see whether these things have made us happy or have they, on the other hand, just made us more frustrated and more unhappy in which case we should realize how to overcome this; how to possess them and not be possessed by them.

For example, what people used to do with their hands in ten hours, now our modern machinery does perhaps in two or three minutes. All this was done to save that nine hours and fifty-seven minutes; but after inventing that machinery, where today is that extra nine hours and fifty-seven minutes? It is nowhere. We have invented all these devices to save time, to have more leisure for ourselves so that we can think about our self and think about the Lord. That is good. I am not against it, but we must *have* that leisure for which we have worked so hard to achieve these inventions—these so-called time-savers. We have forgotten that object, that purpose for which we have worked so hard. That has been obsolutely forgotten. We have become just like a prisoner in a spider's web. We have beautifully woven it and ultimately we find we are a prisoner of it, and cannot get out of it. So we have to work harder to get rid of this net now. The means by which we can get rid of it is nothing but meditation.

So whatever you do, keep your destination and purpose in view. Keep your Home in view and try to achieve it. Do not forget your destination. Do not forget the purpose of human birth. That, we should always keep in view. Work in this world, live in this world and enjoy yourself in this world, but never forget that destination nor leave the path which we have to tread in order to get there. Where we want to go, that goal should always be there in front of us.

Keeping that goal in view, going towards that goal, do not become a slave of worldly achievements and forget your real Home. That is the only thing I can say.

Q. 54. Master, is it not a fact that before mankind can act like true, sincere disciples, we first have to see the light of God and be in communion with the Holy Word or Shabd, then we can be that example that He wants us to be among His subjects?

A. You mean, brother, that to be on the Path we have to see the Light and hear the Sound ?

Q. Inside, I mean.

A. That is right, that is the purpose of being on the Path—to merge into that Light and into that Sound, and ultimately into Him.

Q. 55. What are the penalties when one misses a day of meditation?

A. The penalty is that you have missed the opportunity. There are no penalties in Sant Mat. There are no penalties in devotion. There are no penalties in the way of Love. We have missed the opportunity. What greater penalty can there be? When a lover misses the beloved, that in itself is a penalty; and to a real lover, it is the greatest penalty not to be able to be with the beloved.

We should all attempt to sit in meditation every day, regularly and punctually, because this human form is given to us for that very purpose. So if we do not make use of this opportunity, we are losing something that we should not lose, because we may not get this opportunity so easily again. It is not that if we miss one or two meditation periods we will be penalized or go backwards.

That is an absolutely wrong notion about it. We should try sincerely to give proper time every day, punctually and regularly. If you miss it some day due to some unavoidable circumstances or for any reason, try to make up this deficiency at some other time. The object is that we should get into the habit of doing meditation every day. The question of penalty does not arise on this Path.

Q. 56. Would there, at any time, be a valid excuse for missing one's meditation?

A. If we start justifying our missing the daily meditation period, then there will be no end to it. So I do not want you to find any justification for missing it. We have to put forth all our efforts to give our time every day, but if somehow we miss it, we just miss; but we have missed something that is too valuable to miss. That is all.

Q. 57. I was informed that if we miss one day's meditation, we are taken back twenty-four or thirty days. So if we miss say five days, that would be equal to not doing any meditation in a whole year.

A. Well, you are living at least thousands of miles away from me. So many things can reach you in a different way by the time they reach you here. (Laughter). Such wrong statements are usually traced to what I call "Guest-house gossip" at the Dera, where the guests get together and express their opinions and ideas, and then one of them comes back here and says that is what he or she heard at the Dera. You see, if you try to do a certain thing every day, you get into the habit of doing it. If you neglect it and leave it for some other time or period, you postpone it, you get out of the habit of meditation. If

you lose this habit, you again have to work hard to get back into it. So that is your own loss. Unless we get into the habit of meditation, we will not achieve any results. When we lose time from daily meditation, we are missing something that we should not miss. But there are no personal penalties.

Q. 58. Does the Sound Current actually change one's personality? By that I mean is one able to analyze a person's reaction to something that happened a long time ago in the past, in a previous life, that reaction, subconscious though it is?

A. It is not a question of reaction. By spiritual practice we rise so high that we can meet anything, we can know anything. We advance spiritually. Our mind becomes refined, matured, and we can know anything. That is how spirituality should help us, in developing within ourselves. It must make us a better person. If it does not, then it is not spirituality. When spirituality, that is devotion to Shabd, Nam or the Word grows within us, all the other good qualities of a human being come in us like cream in milk. We do not have to fight in order to learn or to develop those qualities. They come automatically within us. When we have the devotion of the Lord within us, that devotion, that love, brings all the qualities within us. It just transforms us; our whole outlook is changed. The more we go near to Him the more we find ourselves close to each other and the more we love one another. The more we find peace within, the more we find peace outside. It makes us true humans. We then try to understand each other on human level, and not merely on political, social or economic levels; not on religious, national, caste or creed levels—just on human, real human level. But

only the devotion of the Lord and nothing else brings these qualities within us.

Q. 59. I have found that being a satsangi one gets a feeling of selfishness. One gets a feeling of selfishness when on the Path?

A. By meditation or by our devotion to the Lord we become self-centered or concentrated to that side and try to ignore the other side. Is that what you mean?

Q. Yes, we forget a lot of things?

A. No, brother. I do not agree with you. I feel that the more time we give to meditation, the nearer we are to the Lord and the closer we are to our destination; so we go higher and higher. The higher we go, the more space we are covering to look down upon. Rather, we are expanding ourselves; from a part, we are becoming the whole. When we merge into the Lord, we become the Lord. And when we become the Lord, we become everybody. I would say that now, as long as we are slaves of the senses, we are self-centered. And we are self-centered as long as we try to fulfill our desires for anything except to merge back into Him. As we go nearer to the Lord, our vision becomes broader and broader, and we belong to more and more of people. I mean, we get the love of more humanity as we go nearer to the Lord. When we love Him, we automatically love His creation, and then we belong to everybody. When we belong to Him who belongs to everybody, we then also belong to everybody. It is a very wrong conception to think that our meditation will lead us to selfishness.

What is selfishness? To think about yourself? Everybody thinks about himself or herself. Do we think we are selfish when we have clothes while many

other people do not have clothes to wear? Are we not then thinking about ourselves? We have houses to live in and many people do not have a roof over their head. We have cars to ride—other people are walking. Are we not selfish from that point of view? You see, from that point of view, everybody in this world is selfish. But when we start our devotion to the Lord, when we are going nearer to our Home, we are rather getting out of this selfishness. We are then coming into the Whole; our vision becomes much broader, and we know that we belong to everybody. We then realize that unnecessarily we were attaching ourselves to a few, and when we belong to the Lord who belongs to everybody, we also belong to everybody. I think we are getting rid of this selfishness by our devotion to the Lord.

Q. 60. If we attain that highest bliss, how can we humans be happy if we know that our dear ones, or even humanity as a whole, is still suffering? When we still remember such horrible things, how can we be happy?

A. Well, sister, are we happy without achieving that highest bliss? Now we see the suffering of humanity right and left; everywhere we see people suffering terribly; they are miserable. Are we happy? No. When we go back to the highest bliss we will be happy. At least then we will have something to share with others, and we can help them to get rid of their suffering. So, when we are happy, we make them also happy. But when we do not have anything within us we cannot share anything with them. And if we do try to help them before we are able to rise above these things, then instead of helping them we only succeed in sharing their miseries and worries, which helps neither

them nor us. We only make ourselves miserable and torture ourselves, but if we make spiritual progress and rise above all that and have the real devotion and bliss of the Lord, we are in a position to help them and we are also happy. In other words, we merge into the Lord and become the Lord.

Now you may say, how can the Lord be happy when the whole world is suffering? This world has to go on like that. When it becomes perfect, it will cease to exist. We may think that people are suffering unjustly, but they are all reaping the fruits of their own karmas. How can we be happy when so many of our fellow brothers are in prison houses? We do not feel concerned about them at all because we think they have done something for which they must pay. But we would like to improve them so that they may not do these things again and may not have to go to the prison house again. So we help them from a practical point of view. Similarly, when we get the bliss of the Lord, at least we will be happy and then we can also share our happiness with others and make them happy. We can lead them to the path of Bliss, of Wisdom, and they also can become happy.

Q. 61. Master, we seem to have high periods and low periods of spirituality. Is this a trick of the mind or is it part of the development?

A. Sister, ups and downs in meditation do come. You call them high activity or low activity. Our meditation, our spiritual practice, is never smooth. Sometimes we feel that we have gone up, we have made progress. Sometimes we feel that we fell down. Ups and downs always come in meditation. That is

due also, sometimes, to our past karmas and so many other things pulling us which we do not consciously realize. Unconsciously they are affecting us. So we should not worry about the ups and downs. Gradually we have to steer upward.

Q. I seem to have such a time, I wondered if I was missing the right approach; but sometimes it seemed to me that I was there. I seemed to have a direct contact with the Power, and at other times I seem so disturbed that it is hard to live with myself.

A. That is right. One gets such feelings, but one should not feel worried about it. We should just do our duty and give our time to meditation. Then we do overcome such feelings.

Q. The main thing was that I have just wanted to hear you say that I was doing right.

A. Oh, yes. You are definitely doing right. The Sound is within everyone of us, irrespective of anyone, so we need only concentrate at the eye center, the thinking center, to be in touch with that Sound.

Q. One just knows that eventually everything will be all right and one will understand?

A. Yes, that is right. We should never sit in meditation with some excitement or with longing to see something at once, for then the mind gets frustrated and runs out. We should attend to meditation with an absolutely relaxed mind and just do our duty. When it comes, it just comes. Our excitement or our anxiety does not bring anything. It is the concentration that brings it, concentration with love and longing, and His grace, bring it. So when it has to come, it comes automatically.

Q. 62. Maharaj Ji, if a person is very interested in spiritual growth and his environment is such that he is constantly attacking a hurdle and is constantly, from what he recognizes, pushing, in that he is trying to get around in every honorable, possible way, and he himself has digressions; if this environment is constantly holding one back, what must one do to overcome this?

A. Brother, we are all struggling souls in this world. When we have our destination in view, we know the Path leading to the destination and we travel on that. There are falls—we fall, we get up and again we run. There are no failures on the Path. One who does not make a start at all, has no chance of falling, but then he is not getting anywhere. One who runs, has a chance of falling, but he only falls to get up and run again. Pitfalls here and there do pull us back; but as long as we try to overcome those weaknesses, we again get up and again go ahead. We have to do our best under the circumstances. When we are sincere, the Lord comes to our aid and nature also helps us in our environment, in our atmosphere, in our circumstances. The Lord's guiding hand is always there, whether we are conscious of it or not. We should never lose heart when we have pitfalls or when we have fallen, or think that we are being driven out of the Path. No, He never leaves us. Momentarily we may feel that we have left the Path and at another time we feel that we are again on the Path. We explain to ourselves that we have left it. Actually, we do not leave it; we cannot leave it. We are so strongly bound, so strongly got hold of that we cannot leave it, we cannot go astray. But naturally it takes time to learn to walk and then to run; so we should not try to analyze too much. We should do our duties while living in this world, try to give our time

to meditation, try to live to the best of our ability, and then slowly but surely, with His grace, we become successful in our endeavor.

Q. Would that mean that that is part of our karma too, when we have these pitfalls as we travel on the Path?

A. Well, sister, sometimes definitely it is due to our karma, and at other times there are so many things playing in the way. They are Kal's (the Negative Power's) devices to keep us away, to make us frustrated, to frighten us from going ahead, to tempt us in many ways. Sometimes we become their victims too; but as long as we are conscious that we are victims, we are conscious of our destination, we are conscious of travel on the Path and we want to travel on the Path, then we do succeed. The guiding hand is always there to steer us through all those pitfalls, to steer us through all those weaknesses. We pierce through and we do come to the Light. There are many factors to that.

Q. 63. Ultimately we are saved by God's grace? In meditation there seems to be sort of a technique. It is almost as if you are pushing buttons, it seems?

A. No. I follow your question. Excuse me for interrupting. Meditation is not mechanical. We have to work upon it hard. We have to build the atmosphere of meditation around us. It is not a matter of snatching one or two hours every day and forgetting all about it the rest of the day. We practise because we want to live with it. We live in that atmosphere which we build around ourselves through meditation. That is our fort, which saves us from all the temptations and vices. Meditation is not a push-button affair. It is not physical. You see,

it is trying to stop our thoughts from running out. This is just a means. The real meditation is to be in touch with the Sound inside. By this method and means we try to withdraw to this point, the eye center. The actual meditation is to be attached to that Sound inside. That is real meditation. But this is a very strong means, and most important to that end.

Q. 64. The initiate may divide the two and one-half hour meditation period into several periods until he can sit for the full two and one-half hours at one stretch. Does Initiation help one to sit in meditation for two or three hours at one time?

A. I have discussed this question many times. Normally, we should devote one-tenth of our time to meditation. We, in India, have a practice we call seva (service). This Initiation into giving of our time to meditation is also giving our seva to the Lord. In seva we always like to give one-tenth of what we have. So one-tenth of our time is to be devoted to meditation of the Lord. And if we are not lucky enough to give two hours and thirty minutes daily, which comes to one-tenth of our whole time, at one time, we can easily do it in two or three sittings. But we should try, slowly and slowly to do it all in the morning at one stretch. Till we can do it all at one stretch, there is absolutely no harm in doing it in two or three sittings. Every moment that we spend in His memory, in His love, in devotion and meditation, is accounted for and credited to us, and we get its benefits.

So whatever time we can give, we should try to give it. And this is not only the mechanical meditation of giving two hours and thirty minutes, and then forgetting it the rest of the time. Our whole day, every day, should be lived in Sant Mat. We

have to live in meditation in our whole life, in our dealings with everybody. It is not only that particular time spent in sitting in meditation that matters; it is our whole living that matters. We have to *live* the teachings. We have to live in Sant Mat, for Sant Mat, in that atmosphere, day and night. That helps in the long run, and not only the daily two hours and thirty minutes. It must be a part of our life. We have to *live* it.

Q. 65. I have felt that when I attempt to meditate in the center between the eyes, it becomes rather mechanical and I get the feeling that I am sort of twisting God's arm mentally or, without actually saying so, depending on some inner experience, but if I try five minutes of simple prayer I feel as if I am closer and please God much better?

A. Well, brother, that is why I always say that mechanical meditation will not help us so much. We have to *live in meditation*; we have to build up that atmosphere of meditation, of that bliss and peace; live in that meditation, live in that bliss and peace. The mechanical meditation we do need in order to concentrate our mind. If you do a thing every day, you get used to it and develop it into a habit. Similarly, mechanical meditation, as you may call it, if we do it every day, we get so much into the habit of concentration that we forget whether we are doing it mechanically or we are doing it with love and devotion. Until the real love and devotion comes to us, we hardly feel that we are doing anything. We hardly feel we are in love with that. But in order to create that habit within us, we have to start with some way or another. Mere mechanical meditation will not help unless you live in that meditation, become part of that meditation,

merge into that meditation. Your whole life should be that of love and meditation, and not just one or two hours of trying to concentrate.

Q. 66. If one gets greater pleasure from a devotional approach, should one not stick to it?

A. Brother, it is wonderful if one can get a devotional approach. The object of Repetition or Simran is only to concentrate or to withdraw to the eye center, and this is just a means. The end is to attach ourselves to that Sound, or that Shabd, that Nam, inside. If, by any other practice you can concentrate, and you can bring your consciousness back to the eye center, you are most welcome to do it; there is absolutely no harm in doing that.

Q. 67. Why does pain, grief, and loneliness turn one to God, while pleasures, mink coats and wealth turn one away from God?

A. Sister, as you have heard in my discourse, we should not look to God as an escape from these worries, or from these miseries, nor should we forget Him in time of pleasure and affluence. We should look to Him with devotion or love; we must base our meditation on love, not on fear. The basis of spirituality is love, not fear. We should not try to worship the Lord thinking that in return He will relieve us of our miseries or with the idea to fulfill any of our desires. This is a very inferior type of meditation, inferior type of worship of the Lord. We should worship Him because we love Him, because we want to go back and merge into Him. With that devotion and love we should try to worship Him. But naturally when we are in agony, when we are in trouble, we want somebody to lean on. And, there

cannot be anyone better to lean on than the Lord. So in time of worries and turmoil, we naturally look to Him, we try to lean on Him. Well, even that is all right. It is a blessing in disguise. But that should not be our reason for worshiping Him. It must come out of love, and not as an escape from reality, from the world.

Q. 68. Maharaj Ji, if as you just said, mentally we are talking to our friends, if mentally we are talking with our Sat Guru, does that mean any spiritual enrichment, or not?

A. The only advantage is that when you are talking mentally to your Master, you are not talking mentally to other people, and in that way you do not let your thoughts be scattered into the world. Then it will be easier for you to concentrate, spiritually, at the eye center. If you will let your thoughts spread out to the whole world, naturally it will take time to withdraw your consciousness to the eye center. So it is always better to remain within our own self, or to remain within our Master, to live within.

Q. Even if it is just a chat with him in our mind?

A. Whatever it may be. It is always good; at least we feel happy about it always.

Q. Is it a substitute for Bhajan?

A. No. There is no substitute for Bhajan.

Q. 69. Many people feel that with a ouija board they get a person's vibration. It is a type of wood, a small board on legs, which rests on a larger board marked with words, letters of the alphabet, etc., and they get messages. Do you get more of that with your own personal vibrations?

A. Sister, I do not know about that. More or less these messages are from our own mind, our higher mind; but we are also influenced by other people's minds. We are always influenced by the company we keep.

Q. 70. Master, when attempting meditation the mind continually runs out and runs after trifles. Would you please explain that matter for corrections?

A. Brother, it is a constant struggle with the mind. It is not so easy to control our mind, when we have given it such a loose hold. It has been spreading in the whole world all of our life; not only in this life, but also in previous lives; it has got into the habit of running out and not staying at all in its own place. So, naturally, it takes time to curb it, to bring it back, to withdraw the consciousness to the eye center. It takes time. We want to achieve this in a day or two, but we have to make a regular habit of doing it. When we form a habit of something, automatically we succeed. For example, a child starts learning to climb the stairs. He struggles very hard; sometimes he falls and he may scrape his head, hands, body or feet; he again tries and again falls, but he does not stop trying.

You see, we have all come from the same staircase. We have come down so many steps that we do not feel that we have come from that staircase. In trying to go back up, in the beginning the very first step seemed like the Himalayas for us, but now we do not feel those steps at all. But how? By regular practice. We have made a habit to climb, and now we climb without even being conscious of it. So we have to make a regular habit of concentrating our mind. That

is why saints suggest punctuality and regularity in meditation.

Q. There is no special technique, the thing?

A. Brother there is no American short cut. (Laughter). You see, Americans are always worrying about how to save time, and how to save dollars and get the maximum. There is no such way in Sant Mat. There is no such way in the devotion of the Lord.

Q. It is slow and steady that wins the race, is that it?

A. Surely, but we have to be regular and punctual, and live in it. We have also to form a habit of meditation and then slowly and slowly the mind comes back. If every day you do the same thing, ultimately the mind comes back to its own point. It is a constant struggle with the mind, and you cannot fix any time limit or any short cuts on this Path.

Q. And it is all up, of course, to ninety-nine per cent of one's friends and associations?

A. Brother, being with them, we are not to be affected by them. We have to detach ourselves by this constant practice. We will be with them, we will move with them, we will work with them, yet we will not be affected by them. They are, of course, pulling strings, trying to pull us outward; but there is much more forceful pulling inside that just withdraws us. When you water a tree and a storm comes with great speed, it uproots it from the ground. So, all thse group meetings, this hour of discussion, the company of the saints and satsang, this atmosphere of love and devotion, all this is like watering the tree.

And when that storm, that severe storm that is Shabd or Nam, comes, our roots are loosened, and we are off—detached while living our life in this world.

Q. Well, will it not take about a million years?

A. We are assured that it will take not more than four lives, at the most.

Q. 71. Are people who are emotionally disturbed, ready for meditation, or should psychiatry be undertaken?

A. Sister, everybody is ready for meditation. Meditation is a treatment for all ills. You will be happy, you will be contented, you will not miss anything, you will not feel frustrated. All these nervous diseases and the like come by all these things. The purpose of meditation is to keep our thoughts concentrated and to be happy within ourselves.

Q. Psychiatry does the opposite thing; it scatters, or brings one in contact with one's problems.

A. I do not know what that actually is, but the cause of all that is the mind. You see, when we are meditating, we are happy, we are contented within ourselves, then how can we have any mental troubles? Mental trouble is only a symptom; it is not the cause of the disease. You have to root out the cause of the disease.

Q. Through meditation?

A. That is right.

Q. 72. One of the brothers asked if you would recommend taking certain drugs to keep awake during meditation?

A. I am glad he has only asked to take drugs to keep awake. I am glad he did not ask to take drugs

to concentrate (laughter). People take drugs to keep awake, and then take drugs to go to sleep again. You see the folly of it?

Q. You do not recommend them?

A. For certain diseases or bodily ailments drugs are essential. To take them for keeping awake is not right.

Q. 73. In line with the same type of thinking, do the Saints give any credence to the use of color meditation as a tuning fork? Light is color, as I understand it, the different rays or colors are emanations of God, the same as your Sound Current?

A. Sister, it is not the outside colors we have to contemplate on. Those colors are inside. They are a reflection of the five elements. You will understand inside, when you will see those colors.

Q. 74. Do you think that each and every one has to meditate in the same position?

A. No, posture is not of much importance, but it has certain advantages. You people are not used to squatting, so it is perfectly all right for you to select your own posture, in which the body is comfortable so that there is no disturbance because of uneasiness. Yet the posture should not be such as will induce sleep, because one should remain alert. We should not have to wrestle with the body during meditation; it is the mind that we have to control. We have to forget the body. If we are wrestling with it, our mind will be always concerned with the body. Then how can we concentrate? But these postures which are explained to us at the time of Initiation are very good from the point of view of health and for keeping alert so

that sleep does not overtake one during meditation. For example, if you squat and keep your hands as you are told, your backbone will remain straight; there will not be any pain due to congestion or any other discomfort in the body; nor does this posture give any gastric trouble or other undesirable results as from incorrect or unhealthy postures. But if you cannot squat, you can sit in any way that you find convenient and comfortable. The prescribed posture is such that you do not need anything at all to support you. You do not need a chair, nor do you need any other support. This is for the average man who has nothing with him, as even then he can sit in that posture. Nothing external is needed. One needs only the desire to meditate and thus be in constant communion with Him.

Q. 75. My legs will not permit me to sit in the regular posture. Is there any other way that we can sit, or is there any other proper means?

A. Posture has absolutely no relationship with our meditation. This is just for health purposes. We, in India, are used to sitting without the support of any chairs, or cushion, so we can just squat as I am doing now; and if you will squat like this and keep your hands here and straighten your arms, your backbone will naturally be straight. It is always essential to keep the backbone straight in meditation. Then you will not get sleepy, you will feel no discomfort, and there will be no physical trouble in the body as in an incorrect posture. (The 'squatting' referred to here means to sit cross-legged on the floor.) But if you cannot sit like this, you can make your own posture comfortable for meditation. We should

not wrestle with the body; we should sit in a relaxed manner, a relaxed way. Any posture which suits your requirements and your physical fitness is all right. If you can sit like this, it is all right; but posture will not help you in your meditation in any way. It can only help your body, so that you can forget about it and do not have to be conscious of it in any way during meditation. Mentally, when you are meditating, you forget the way you are sitting. You are to become absolutely unconscious of the way you are sitting. The posture does not make any difference, whether you sit on a chair or on the floor, or lie on your back. But if you lie on your back, naturally that posture has association with sleep, so you are likely to fall asleep. And if you do not sit comfortably nor in a way which is good for your health, that is no advisable as far as the body is concerned. But in a man's spiritual development, posture does not make any difference at all. We are just to keep our attention here, between the eyebrows, inside, and by repetition and concentration, we have to forget about the posture.

Q. 76. Master, pertaining to the question of posture, what about Hatha Yoga? The positions that they advocate healthwise, would they be beneficial?

A. Hatha Yoga is for health purposes. It has nothing to do with meditation. Hatha Yoga, in other words, is a set of physical exercises, just to keep the body fit for meditation, but it is not meditation in itself.

Q. Yes, I realize that; but would it be advisable in certain cases?

A. There is no harm in doing Hatha Yoga to keep the body fit. For example, I do some of the Hatha

Yoga exercises, because I do not get time to walk or go out. So, for ten or fifteen minutes every day, I do some breathing exercises or Hatha Yoga exercises, just to keep the body fit.

Q. 77. Why do the older forms of yoga require the cultivation of the lower bodily centers?

A. Brother, yoga, as we take it to be today, is something different from the teachings of the saints. I should say the teachings of the Saints are the real yoga. Yoga means something which unites your soul to the Lord. It really means 'union'. But some yogis, as I call them, rather than do the real yoga, try to make progress from the lower centers upwards to the eye center, and then think of going higher up. If you are in the middle of a hill and you would like to reach the top, you would not like to come back to the bottom and start from there to reach the top; you would like to make a start from the middle upward. We are all sitting here, in the eye center. This is the seat of the soul and mind knotted together. If you forget anything and you want to think about it, recall it, your hands automatically touch your forehead. So this is the headquarters which has to do with our thinkings; this is the thinking center. And the Saints say that from here we should try to go up rather than first draw our attention down to the rectum, to the lower centers, and then again slowly take it from there to the eye center, which is already our headquarters. So why not just concentrate here and go up with the help of the Sound?

Sant Mat, the teachings of the Saints, are quite different from those of the so-called yogis, who try to come back to the lower centers instead of taking the

attention up from its present headquarters. Some saints have described those centers so that the yogis may not think that the saints do not know about these centers. Swami Ji, Kabir Sahib, Guru Nanak and many others have described them; but all the same they advise us not to get entangled in these centers. We have to rise above them eventually, so why waste time in going down to them and perhaps even getting stuck there and forgetting our goal? Nothing is gained thereby. Besides, even if we do not get deceived and detained at the flower centers, which is unlikely, why take that chance and waste precious time? In this modern world, when the life span is so short and we are so much absorbed in this world, in our struggle for existence, we shall never be able to achieve our goal if we start from the lower centers.

Q. 78. When we start withdrawing from the feet upwards, do we not in any way, at least, have to by-pass the lower centers?

A. When you try to hold your consciousness at the eye center, automatically you will withdraw the attention upward, without paying any attention whatsoever to any of the centers below the eyes. Somewhere in the Bible is mentioned, "I die daily". This is what Saint Paul mystically tried to explain to us. Every saint in the East explains to us that we have to die while living. We have to withdraw our attention from the body and bring our consciousness back to the eye center.

Then, to ollow those yogic exercises is very difficult. We cannot do it in this modern age. Today we have hardly any time even to sit for meditation for an hour or two. Those yogis who performed

these difficult exercises in the olden times had to go through extremely rigid disciplines to achieve all that. And after all that, they still had to start from the eye center if they wanted to go up. It is impossible for you and me to do those exercises in these days, so saints always advise us just to forget about all that and to keep our attention here, at the eye center, and go ahead. The living Master saves us from all that danger, hardship, confusion and delay.

Q. 79. Is the pineal gland the third eye?

A. Yes, that is right. But the third eye itself is not a physical part of the body. If you dissect, you will not find it.

Q. 80. Is there a center in the solar plexus as well? Through reading various philosophies I find that some of them seem to say that a center of subconscious feeling is there in the solar plexus, and the yogis talk about the solar plexus chakra?

A. They start from the lowest chakra in the physical body and try to go up slowly and slowly by passing through the various chakras below. The Saints have however modified the process so that we need not to go through all the lower chakras of the physical body. Our thinking center in the body is the eye center and this is the seat of the mind and the soul in our conscious state. From here we have to go up. Supposing you are in the middle of a hill and wish to reach the top. Would you like to go to the foot of the hill first and then climb upward or go straight up from where you are? You are already at the eye center. Why not go up from here rather than go down to the solar plexus and then cover the arduous journey upward.

We have just to concentrate here, at the eye center. When our thoughts are running out from this place, we have to bring them back and try to hold our thoughts at this place, keep our consciousness in this place, and from here our spiritual journey begins. So we need not bother to go down and then again come up to the starting point.

Q. 81. If a person meditates according to the Raja Yoga method, it seems that forces could be aroused, as I have heard, by the Kundalini rising within an individual and he could find himself in certain difficulties. That is why the Raja Yoga approach is not so safe?

A. Brother, I would not like to comment on any other method of meditation. But let me tell you that in modern times it is very difficult to follow these yogas, or to try to awaken the Kundalini. You cannot control it. Neither have we that health nor that energy nor that time to do these yogas in this modern age. Nor are there such practical guides as can help us on that path. They are more or less a thing of the past, I would say. By raising the Kundalini within you, what you will get is power or control of the mind to perform some supernatural things; that is all; nothing else. For example, you will be able to make your body so light that you can fly, but to what purpose? You have planes to fly over thousands of miles. There is absolutely no use dabbling in these things at all. We have to do spiritual practice for spiritual advancement, for having the real bliss and real love of the Lord. That is the purpose.

With these other methods, sometimes the ego sprouts in us: "I can do this; I can do, that", but with spiritual practices, we learn to 'digest' His grace, and

humility comes to us. The more humble we become. the more He gives us. The more we get from Him, the more we digest, and the more humble we become. But in these other practices we generally become egoistic, and this takes us far away from our distination. We have to develop our mind. We have to develop our spiritual consciousness. We have to come to that stage nearer to the Lord, so that we can merge into that Divine Will, that Divine Light, that Divine Music, and get real peace and happiness within.

Q. 82. I was referring to the type of yoga by which a person concentrates here, and my thinking has always been that if a person concentrates between the eyebrows, the Kundalini will automatically arise?

A. No, with this practice we do not arouse the Kundalini at all. We are unconscious of the body. We are not conscious of any organ of the body at all when we start spiritual practice. We do not even feel that we are in a body, not to speak of arousing the Kundalini! We have a split consciousness, so we feel that our body is somebody else's body moving about or sitting—we are the onlookers. So, this spiritual practice that I am trying to explain, this Surat Shabd Yoga as we call it, or Sant Mat, or attaching ourselves to that Divine Power or Shabd or Nam, has absolutely nothing to do with the Kundalini, which is aroused at one of the lowest centers in the body. Our concentration starts above this; in fact, we start at the highest center in the body, which is the eye center.

Q. 83. Do you approve of ascetic practices as a means of purifying the body and soul? And if you do so, what kind of practice do you recommend?

A. Brother, when we withdraw from the body, the body is automatically purified. It becomes sublime. There is nothing wrong with the body, it is when the mind runs to the senses that we say that the body is bad. When we withdraw the mind to the eye center, the same body becomes pure. So, we have first to make this body pure. Then we have to make our mind pure by attaching it to the Shabd or Nam inside. When it returns to its destination, its source, the mind becomes pure.

In our body, the seat of the soul and mind knotted together is in the center behind the eyes. From here our mind is being pulled down by the senses. As long as the mind is a slave of the senses, you can say that the body is impure. When you withdraw your mind from the senses, and take it back up to the eye center, you can say that the body has become pure; but still your mind is not pure because it can be drawn back to the senses again. However, when you attach your mind to that Shabd or Nam, that attachment detaches you permanently from the world, and your mind starts going back to its own destination or home. Then the mind becomes pure.

As long as your mind is being drawn downward, toward the senses, it is your enemy. When the mind starts withdrawing from the senses and goes back to its original home, which is Trikuti, the second stage on the spiritual journey, then the mind becomes your friend. So we have to convert this enmity to friendship, and when the mind goes back to its own source, to its own destination, then only the soul gets release from the mind. At this stage the soul also becomes pure, as all the coverings and influences of the mind are removed. And when there is no particle left on

it and it becomes absolutely pure, it shines in its own pristine glory and automatically merges back into the Lord again. So it is by meditation, the spiritual practice, that we make our body pure, we make our mind pure and we make our soul pure.

Q. 84. Most of the events of our lives are predestined, but is the event of reaching home the only event that is not predestined? That is, can we reach this home whenever we put the proper effort into it?

A. Brother, from that point of view, everything is destined in the sense that when the Lord wants us to go back to Him, He creates those circumastances, that atmosphere which makes us think about Him, about the Path, the Way leading back to Him. Without His grace we will never come on the Path or on the Way of devotion; or, in other words, we will never come in contact with the Saints at all without His grace. When He wants us to come back and to merge into Him, then only all these processes start; then only we come in contact with the Saints; then only we start meditating. But we, ourselves have to work, we have to make ourselves receptive of His grace. He will create the circumstances; He will create the atmosphere for us in which we can work our way back up to our Home. So, when He wants us to do so, then only do we work. But unless we make the effort and work, we cannot reach our destination.

Q. In other words, no matter how much effort we put into it or how hard we try, if the time is not right, we will never get Home?

A. Brother, it is just like this: A beggar comes to your door to ask you for alms, but first he wants to

be assured that he is going to get someting from the house; before knocking at the door; otherwise, he is not going to beg. This is a wrong attitude. We are all beggars at His door. We have to beg. We have to ask, but He always gives. We should not say that when He wants us to meditate we will meditate; otherwise, why bother about it. That is a wrong approach, and definitely a wrong attitude. We are all beggars at His door, so we should all do our best and leave everything to Him. Of course, we will only get when and what He wants us to get but we must make the effort by doing the spiritual practice. And I assure you, if we really beg from our heart, He is always ready to give. If we come one step, He comes ten steps to receive us. But our devotion must be pure; our longing, our desire to merge back into Him must be absolutely one-pointed. We have to love Him for His sake. We do not have to worship Him for our children's sake or for the sake of business, money or worldly achievements. That is surely a wrong way to approach Him. That is a wrong attitude, or motive for meditating on Him. We want *Him;* we worship *Him;* we love *Him;* because we want to go back and merge into *Him.* In India some people worship snakes, not because they love them but because they fear their bite. We should not worship the Lord out of fear that if we do not worship Him some calamity will befall us or that He will punish us in some way. We should worship out of love. The basis of religion is not fear; it is absolutely pure love. So we have to base all our worship and meditation on the foundation of Love. Then only shall we get the best results.

Q. 85. Master, is it necessary to be completely relaxed during meditation? How can we guard against trying to force it?

A. The results that we will get will be much greater if we attend to our meditation with an absolutely relaxed mind. We should never sit in meditation with excitement—that I am going to see something, something is just going to happen, something is just about to come. Then your mind is always in that excitement of expectation. You should just attend to your meditation with an absolutely relaxed mind. Whatever is to come, will come automatically. It comes when you least expect it. And when you are anticipating or when you are excited about it, it does not come at all, becuase then the mind is not actually concentrated, but is scattered in excitement. So we have to attend to meditation in a completely relaxed manner. That is why it is generally advised to sit for meditation in the morning. Usually, by morning, we forget all that happened to us in the past day, and our body is also relaxed physically; besides, there is more quietness and calmness in the atmosphere. So if we try to meditate in that relaxed atmosphere, it is always better.

Q. 86. Maharaj Ji, most of the books tell us, or indicate at least, that prior to going in, the whole body becomes numb. Is that always the case, or are there cases occasionally where the person might go in and not have the feeling or sensation of numbness throughout the body?

A. We may not be conscious of our body having become numb, and still we have withdrawn. We say we start withdrawing from our feet upwards, and that we call numbness. It does not exactly mean physical numbness. It is withdrawal of the attention,

not being aware of the body, that kind of numbness. When our soul current is not spread through this body, outward, but is being withdrawn inward; that is numbness. Sometimes we do feel a little numbness in the body, but even without feeling any numbness in the body, we can be 'in'—we can see many visions inside. But that is not within our control. However, when we have actually withdrawn, when our body has become absolutely numb, then it is in our control as to what we are seeing inside. Otherwise too, it may happen that even before our actual withdrawal, we have a glimpse or experience of spiritual vision.

What do we mean by 'inside'? When you close your eyes, you are automatically 'inside'. Holding your attention within here, between the eyebrows, that is 'inside'. There is no particular inside, where we have to see or search. When you do not think about anything in the world, then you are here, in the center behind the eyes. When your mind is not scattered and your attention is concentrated here, you are 'in', you are within yourself, you are 'inside'. Then naturally you start withdrawing upward and start seeing something inside. That is what we mean by numbness.

Q. In other words, it may be a complete forgetting of the body itself, or any feeling in it at all, rather than a distinct feeling of numbness?

A. That is right. We are to become absolutely unconscious of our body, even as to whether it exists or not. Sometimes we feel that somebody else is sitting in meditation—we are just separate from the body and we are watching who is sitting in the body, and we watch who is moving about in this world, not

feeling that it is our own body. We feel that we are the audience and we are watching ourselves. That is withdrawal from the body. By practice we get into this habit.

When we start withdrawing from the body, we feel the duality, that this body does not belong to us—we are in it and yet we are out of it. Sometimes you feel that there is somebody else sleeping or lying and you are away from you and that you are away from the body. You are watching who is sleeping. That type of feeling we have sometimes. There is nothing to fear. One American lady wrote to me that she had to consult some doctors or mental specialists, because she always felt that she was something away from the body. That feeling is bound to come within you. There is nothing to fear and there is nothing to worry about, as that is what we are trying hard to accomplish.

Q. 87. This has always bothered me: How do we know that by reaching Sahansdal Kanwal, by reaching Trikuti, by reaching Sach Khand, we are ascending? Everybody talks about going *up*, but how do we know we are going *up*?

A. You feel it within, I tell you. You sense it intuitively and gradually you *know*. When you see a map of the country between here and New York, you are given all the information as to what you are going to see on the way, and when you are driving on that freeway and seeing all those things, how do you know that you are going to New York? When you see those signs on the way, the milestones and the scenery, they confirm that the path is right and that New York is only a few miles farther. You know that you are on the way to New York. Similarly,

when all the saints explain to us that we will see so and so on our way up, and we see those things on the way, we feel we are going up. Besides, you yourself will know that you are going up. You have a certain bliss, certain contentment, certain happiness in those situations. You feel a certain joy and you dance within yourself in happiness. When you are on those planes, you radiate happiness. When you are going down, you know how miserable you feel. So, naturally, when you are away from such situations you can also feel or know if you are going up.

Q. 88. When we are in meditation?

A. Not only in meditation, but when we reach a certain stage where we are able to remove the veil of mind from our way, when we are able to unknot the knot of soul and mind knotted together. I'll give you a little example. The water in a cloud is very pure, but once it becomes rain, it mixes with the dirt of the ground and it becomes very dirty, it stagnates. It forgets its origin. It forgets that it was pure, very pure. It just starts thinking that it is a part and parcel of this dirt and loses its identity even. But when with the heat of the sun it evaporates, leaves that dirt, it realizes, "I am something different and this dirt is something different. Unnecessarily, having been in the company of the dirt, I was thinking myself dirt, a part of it". So the moment it leaves the dirt it realizes that it is something different and the dirt is something different. Then it thinks about its own origin, which is the cloud in the sky. It goes back, merges back into the cloud. The same is true of our soul. It is a part of that Ocean Divine. Having been in the company of the mind—and the mind is

already a slave of the senses—we have lost, and forgotten our identity. We have to reverse the process. In other words, our mind is to control the senses and the soul is to control the mind. When we withdraw our mind from the senses, we take our mind back to its original home, Trikuti, the second spiritual stage. Then the soul gets release from the mind. There we know who we are and we think about our origin. Then the soul, freed from the mind and senses, goes up and merges back into its own origin.

Socrates said, "Know thyself". Self-realization is essential before God-Realization. Unless we know who we are, how can we know who God is? How can we have His concept? So we have got to control our mind, subdue it, before our soul can realize its own self or we can get rid of the intellectual barrier and merge back into the Lord. All these barriers and obstacles are instincts of the mind, and when the soul is rid of those converings, it is pure, it is free to merge back into its Source.

Q. 89. Master, should one repeat the Names, does it matter, whether slowly, or...?

A. Just as you feel like. Do not think that you will get better results by repeating fast or slow. Simply repeat in a relaxed manner, just as you normally speak, but mentally, without the use of the tongue. It is the mind that is to do the repeating.

Q. Master, that brings up the question about the pronunciation. How important is that?

A. It is of no importance at all. It is the attention that matters.

Q. 90. When I was sick, I could not remember the five words and I was so frustrated. All I wanted to remember was the five words. What does one do in case one cannot remember?

A. You cannot help it. You can only do something about it when you are conscious.

Q. 91. Should we eliminate all thought as we repeat the Names, and center on an emotional feeling?

A. While repeating the Names (doing the Simran), we should try to contemplate on the form of the Master, keeping his form here, between the eyebrows. Try to realize him after contemplating on his form and repeating the Names. Then we have something to hold our attention there while repeating, something which helps us to withdraw up to the center. Simran helps us in withdrawing our scattered thoughts and becoming one-pointed; and Dhyan (Contemplation) helps us in keeping our attention here, at the particular center. So we should try to do both at the same time.

Q. 92. When doing Simran, is it possible that when one shuts one's eyes, that one's attention can be outside instead of inside? The literature speaks of the eyes focussing. You talked about it the other day, about causing problems with the muscles of the eyes. If one sees something from a distance with the eyes shut, like a form, is it possible that this form is on the outside instead of inside and that the focus could be in the wrong place?

A. At the time of meditation we are just to close our eyes. It is our *attention* that is to focus. The physical eyes are not involved at all. If our attention is outside, we feel that we are outside. We are contemplating outside. If we forget about the outside world, we just close our eyes and hold our attention mentally in the darkness, we see behind the eyes. My meaning of "behind the eyes" is that whenever you close your

eyes you are automatically in that darkness. Whenever you close your eyes, if you do not let your thoughts run out, scatter out, you are naturally in this darkness; you are naturally behind the eyes. At that place your attention has to contemplate on the form of the Master.

You are not physically to try to invert your eyes nor to try to find any particular point in the darkness. If you do that, you will damage your physical eyes. You are just to forget absolutely about your eyes. Mentally, if you will forget about your eyes and forget about yourself and forget about the outiside surroundings; you will be somewhere; and that will be within yourself, that will be in the darkness. As you repeat these five Holy Names while contemplating on the form of the Master, you are going within, and you are not going out.

Do not try to visualize someone moving about or running about. If you do, then your attention is scattered outside, and slowly and slowly you will run outside; that is, your attention runs out. Try to eliminate and completely ignore everything that you are seeing going about outside and try to contemplate on the form of the Master inside, in the darkness. Whether it appears or not, do not let your thoughts run out but keep your mind, in the repetition of the five Holy Names. You will not have to think that now you are within or that now you are without. When your attention is in this darkness, you automatically will be within.

Another thing I may add about your question: At the time of Simran, we are not to pay any attention to breathing. Some people who have been doing Hatha Yoga or these breathing exercises, or different

types of yoga, sometimes try to mix the Simran with breathing. That is wrong. There are many schools, which try to teach that principle, but satsangis should never bother with the breathing at all at the time of meditation. I am talking to you; you are listening to me. Neither you are conscious of your breathing nor am I conscious of my breathing. Breathing is a normal function of the body. At the time of meditation we are just to forget about our breathing, forget about our eyes, forget even about ourselves. Keeping your attention mentally in the darkness, you will automatically be in the center behind the eyes. You are not to try to locate any particular spot behind the eyes. If you can eliminate the thoughts of the outside world, you will stop letting your mind run out, you will automatically be within yourself, in that darkness, and there you have to contemplate on the form of the Master and do the Simran and Bhajan.

Q. 93. Like many satsangis, I have some difficulties in meditation and doing Simran. Invariably I fall asleep and start snoring. (Laughter). Somehow these Holy Names blend into one another and form a certain kind of pattern that is conducive to sleep. What advice will you give us to keep awake, as we all seem to have the same trouble?

A. Yes, I have understood your question, brother. When we are asleep, we are generally at the throat center. When we meditate, we try to concentrate at the eye center. There is very little difference between the method of going to sleep and that of trying to concentrate; so generally our attention at the time of Simaran slips down from the eye center to the throat center and we go to sleep. The reasons can be many, but mostly we have too many activities of

mind and body that prevent us from getting the required amount of sleep. I do not know why, but in this modern society, we have so many types of engagements. We do not try to compromise with them, but we do compromise with our sleep and our health in order to fulfill those engagements. We would like to work all day and enjoy sleep all night, and from the sleep time we take our meditation time, disregarding what the body needs.

After proper sleep, then leave your bed, move about in your room, wash your face with cold water and sit for Bhajan, there will be no question of sleep overtaking you. We also have to adjust the intake of our food accordingly. We have to go to bed with a light stomach. I am glad to find that in your country you generally take your supper very early, and so go to bed with a light stomach. The main thing is that the body must get proper sleep, otherwise, we are likely to go to sleep at the time of meditation. If you work all day and rush about at night, when you sit in Bhajan early in the morning naturally the body wants to go back to sleep. If you give proper rest to the body, there is no reason why you should fall asleep during meditation.

Generally, it is better if you can leave your bed for meditation because we associate sleep with our bed, so again our mind wants to go to sleep. You should leave your bed, walk about, feel quite alert and yet calm and relaxed before sitting for the meditation. And sit on a separate chair or whatever you have allotted for that purpose, then there are less chances of going to sleep.

Q. 94. Besides getting more sleep, would you advise repeating these Names slower so that the mind would be forced to concentrate?

A. No, speed of repetition does not make any difference. Whether we do it fast or slow, does not make any difference. We should just do it at normal speed. It is the concentration which matters here. That is the main thing. You should do your Simran *with* the attention and while keeping it here, at the eye center.

Q. 95. Master, I read in *Spiritual Gems*, perhaps it is an answer to a specific letter, there is a statement made not to do spiritual practice before retiring. Was that meant for a specific person, or was that meant to be general?

A. What? We should not devote time to spiritual practice before retiring? No, no. You do not seem to have understood rightly. I rather advise the other way, that while trying to go to sleep, we should repeat the Names, and when we get up in the morning, we can concentrate much better, because even in our dreams we did not let our thoughts go astray. I think there is either a mistake in printing or a misunderstanding.

Q. 96. Maharaj Ji, if while going to bed, the Sound comes, one should listen to the Sound, but if the process keeps on going and we want to do Simran...when?

A. What do you mean by 'when'?

Q. I mean when it is time for bed instead of starting the five Holy Names, you start hearing the Sound?

A. It is the same thing. If you want to hear the Sound, you hear the Sound; or if you want to do the Simran, it is the same thing. As long as you are in

tune to that side, whatever you do in His Name is all right.

Q. 97. Maharaj Ji, is there ever a time during meditation when one stops breathing? Would it be dangerous?

A. We should not think of breathing at the time of meditation. Those people who have been doing Pranayam, breathing exercises, are generally told at the time of Initiation that they should not interfere with breathing at the time of Simran; otherwise, they are likely to be victims of some breathing difficulty—asthma or something like that. You are talking to me, I am talking to you. Neither you are conscious of your breathing nor am I conscious of my breathing. This is a normal function of the body. Let it go on. We have to concentrate mentally, here at the eye center. We are not to interfere with the breathing at all, and then there is no danger whatsoever. Some people advise doing Simran in rhythm with each breath inhaled and exhaled. That is not right. We should pay no attention whatsoever to breathing while doing Simran; in fact, not during the entire meditation period.

Q. 98. Master, am I correct in understanding that even though an initiate has followed the metaphysical path most of the time and leaned heavily upon mental affirmation and declaration of the truth as he understood it, in times of stress and to solve problems and just to keep the mind clear, he should and will benefit by leaving all that and relying on Simran of the five Holy Names, even during the day—from time to time—when work does not require his concentration?

A. I have not exactly followed your question, sister. But whenever we are free, mentally, we should try to devote time to Simran. We will feel the definite

advantage of it when we are giving proper time to our meditation, for we will have much better concentration, quicker concentration, and we will be in touch with the Sound sooner. If during the whole day we are absorbed in doing Simran, two definite advantages are there: First, we are not letting our thoughts be scattered too much, so in a lesser time we will be able to concentrate when we sit for meditation. Second, mostly we are unhappy in thinking about what has passed, and our future is always bothering or worrying us. So when we are absorbed in Simran, we will be at least safe from all this unnecessary worry. We should, therefore, try to make use of our time in doing Simran whenever we are free mentally. That has definite advantages.

Q. 99. Would you please explain the benefits of what I call the individual repetition of the Names, Simran, while we are eating, or working at a desk, which does not require too much concentration?

A. Our mind is never still and is always thinking about something. It is always thinking about worldly faces, worldly objects, and it is never still. So if we want to forget those things, we have to direct the mind into a different channel. In order to do that, we should repeat the Name of the Lord while moving about or doing our work. There are two things that we are usually thinking about. Mostly we are unhappy thinking about what has been our past. We generally think about that and have a sense of guilt about it, and then we are sorry for what we have done and are always worring and repenting, or feeling sorry for ourselves and trying to justify our actions. Secondly, we are always bothered about our future

and that is always making us frustrated and unhappy. If you will keep your mind constantly in Simran, you will not have this sense of guilt or frustration or unhappiness; and, when you sit for your meditation period, because you have not allowed your thoughts to be scattered out into the world, you will easily be able to withdraw your attention back up to the eye center and will be in touch with the Sound.

If you are always thinking about the world, then by spending only one or two hours a day in Simran, you cannot possibly concentrate or withdraw your thoughts to the eye center, because it needs a similar amount of time to withdraw it, as the time it has taken to scatter out. So Saints always advise that when we are mentally free, when we are walking about, when we have nothing to do, we can keep our attention in Simran. We should get into the habit of Simran to such an extent that even if we are talking to someone, it should automatically go on within us. The advantage is that we will be able to detach ourselves easily from the worldly things or the nine apertures of the body and come back to the eye center, and can then easily attach ourselves to Shabd.

Simran is a dry and insipid process, but a very, very essential process. We can hear the Sound without first doing Simran, and we will be happy to hear that Sound, but at that stage the Sound will not pull us. Unless we are able to withdraw our attention up to this point, the Sound will not take us up. We will hear it, we will enjoy it, but we will remain where we are. So especially in the beginning, we should give more time to Simran and less time to hearing the Sound. When we are sufficiently withdrawn with the help of Simran, then we should try to give

more time to hearing the Sound and less time to Simran.

Simran is the means to contact Shabd, and go up with its help is the end. So Simran is a very important means of withdrawing to this point, the eye center, and to be in touch with the Sound. Therefore, we should try to give more time to Simran in the beginning, and less time to the Sound. But when the Sound is clearly audible and strong, it is pulling us up, we are enjoying it, then we should switch from Simran to hearing the Sound and just submit ourselves to the Sound. Ultimately the Sound, and not the Simran, is to pull us up. Simran ceases to exist when we cross the first stage.

Q. 100. Can Dhyan be used simultaneously with Simran? Or should it be separate?

A. If we contemplate on the form of the Master while doing Simran, we will have much better results, for then our mind will have something to hold it there while we are doing the mental repetition of the five Holy Names. They both go together.

Q. 101. Should Simran be perfectly automatic or should it be visual? I mean, one is concentrating on the third eye. Now doing that and at the same time concentrating on each Name would be difficult?

A. We should never try to find out a particular focus or a point within. Neither should we physically try to invert the eyes or strain the eyes to bring them to a particular point or focus. That would damage the eyes. We should absolutely forget about the eyes during meditation. We should just keep our attention here, in the forehead, and close the eyes without

straining them at all. We are not to concentrate on the words. It is our attention that is to repeat the words and concentrate here in the darkness.

Q. We should not try to see the words?

A. No. There is nothing to see in the words. They have no form. They are just there to hold our attention in the darkness. If we have seen the Master, we can contemplate on his form to hold our attention there. Otherwise, just keep the attention in the darkness and just do the Simran. You are not to contemplate on or see the words or try to think about them.

Q. 102. Breathing should be relaxed before starting Simran; for example, yogic breathing? Is this advisable?

A. No. Those are physical exercises to keep the body and mind alert, and that is good, but has nothing to do with meditation. Any physical exercise to keep the body healthy is good. These exercises were adopted by the yogis because generally they were confined to their own small cottages or caves, where they used to give their time to meditation. They would hardly go out, so they developed, centain exercises by which, for half an hour or an hour a day, even while staying in their cottage, they could keep their body healthy and strong. They developed all these eighty-four types of postures and so many breathing exercises to keep healthy. Sometimes I do these myself for ten or fifteen minutes a day if at all I get time; but they have nothing to do with spirituality.

Q. 103. What about Pranayam?

A. Breathing exercises are Pranayam.

Q. As well as the visual exercises of the entering of the life-force of the Pranayam?

A. This is another mental development, but still it will not take you very far. It will help you to concentrate to some extent, but it is not very easy in these modern days for the householder or for people who are so busy with their own work, to do all these things without proper guidance. For Pranayam and Hatha Yoga you constantly need a teacher to guide you at every little step; otherwise there are so many complications. And with all that, what you gain is just good health, you can control your breath, and you can control your mind to some extent, but it does nothing for you beyond that.

Q. What I am trying to do with this is to settle my body and my mind down to such an extent that it is reasonably restful.

A. Naturally, a relaxed body, a relaxed mind is good for meditation. A tense body and a worried mind cannot attend to meditation, so the yogis used to just relax the body with exercise, and relax the mind by breathing exercises, with Pranayam, before they started their meditation. But this was just the means and not the end or objective. Nowadays people have taken these things as an end, and think that this is meditation. That idea is wrong; otherwise, there is no harm in doing these things.

Q. There is no harm in taking in prana or doing these exercises?

A. It is all right if one has the time for it and can get a good guide or teacher. If you say that by reading books you can do it, that is not possible, because there is always the likelihood of some sort of complications. I know of many cases where, even

under proper guidance, there were many complications, because modern times are not suited for these things. In olden days those who practised these things used to be absolutely celibate and they lived in the forests. They could do it, and probably that was their need also; but now the atmosphere in the world is entirely different. If one can do it, it is very good; but one should not do it for meditation; that is what I mean to say.

Then, too, it depends upon your physical fitness. Some people have a weak heart and it is harmful for them to do the Pranayam and some of the other yogic exercises. I have seen many cases where these yogis or their teachers have never bothered about or tested the student's heart beforehand, and when the student tried the exercise it resulted in heart failure. Because they do not know the physical aspect of the body, they have the same set of exercises which they try to teach everybody, whether one is a blood-pressure case or a diabetic or a heart case or a nervous person. They have the same set of exercises for everyone, and sometimes it becomes quite a complicated affair.

Q. 104. Maharaj Ji, before listening to the Sound Current, one is supposed to do Simran, and if the Sound is so compelling, then what should be done?

A. The object of Simran is to concentrate, to bring our consciousness back up to the eye center and to be in touch with the Sound, the Shabd. But if sometimes during Simran that Shabd is pulling us, we can easily switch over from Simran to the Shabd. There is no hard and fast timing, that this must be given to Simran and this time must be given to Shabd. Sometimes, if during listening we do not hear anything and

our mind is not at all in the Shabd, we can switch over to Simran. If, sometimes, during the Simran, the Sound is so audible and so catching and pulling, we can switch on to the Sound. There are no hard and fast rules. We are told these timings at the beginning when we have to start from 'A' and work towards the end, when we have to learn the A, B, C's, that this much time we should give to Simran, and this much time to Shabd. The more we are able to concentrate, we can decrease our time for Simran and increase our time for the Shabd.

Q. 105. Master, in addition to giving the larger part of our meditation time to Simran, did I understand correctly it must always be done first, before Bhajan, or could one listen to the Sound Current first if it happened to be very loud at the beginning?

A. Sister, the procedure, especially for the beginners, is to devote at least three-fourths of the time to Simran and Dhyan, then one-fourth of the time to hearing the Sound. But if one is successful in concentration, one is successful in withdrawing his consciousness up to the eye center, and without any effort he is behind the eyes, and hears the sound then he can give less time to Simran and more time to Shabd. When the Shabd is pulling, the Shabd is attracting or the Shabd is strongly audible within, then you can switch from Simran to the Shabd. There is no hard and fast rule that while at the time of Simran, we must avoid Shabd. No. If, at the time of doing Simran, the Shabd is very strong, pulling and catching, we are not to resist it; rather, we have to submit to that Sound.

The object of Simran is just concentration, to be in touch with the Shabd. Simran and Dhyan are just

a means to an end. We have to attach ourself to that Sound. So, if one is lucky to hear it and it is pulling, he should not ignore it, nor should one insist on doing Simran at that time. He can switch onto the Sound. Ultimately, the stage comes when you cease to do Simran. You listen only to Shabd and you merge into Shabd, and Shabd takes you back. Then you do not need Simran at all, for the moment you close your eyes you are in Shabd.

Q. 106. Maharaj Ji, what does it mean, when without any effort we are behind the eye? What does it mean to be behind the eye?

A. When you close your eyes, you are automatically within. Our thinking center, the third eye, or the single eye as it is referred to in the Bible, is just in the center behind the eyes, it is not physical. There is nothing physical about it. You just close the eyes and you will be automatically behind the eyes, when you have fully concentrated at the eye center. That is what I mean.

Q. Since you point to this spot, is that here, about the middle of the eyebrows?

A. That also, I would like to make clear. You should not try to find out any particular point within yourself. You should not physically try to invert, pull or stretch your eyes or focus them on any particular point. In this way you are liable to harm your eyes. There is no particular point on which you have to focus. When you close your eyes, you see darkness. You feel you are in this darkness. Mentally, keep your attention in this darkness and do the Simran with the attention of the mind. Do not try to find that you are at the center of the forehead or that you are

to the right or to the left of the forehead. You cannot physically find that point inside. It has nothing to do with these eyes. You are just to close your eyes, and when you close your eyes you will automatically be behind your eyes in this darkness. It is natural. Just keep your attention there and do the Simran. Mentally keep concentrating in the darkness and do not try to follow anything. Do not try to pursue anything. You are only to keep your attention mentally in the darkness and do Simran.

Q. 107. Well, in the case of meditation, if a person concentrates between the eyebrows, let us say a person had one of these mantras. he repeats the mantra and suddenly drops it and holds the mind in blank—I am not thinking of satsangi territory—does one hold the mind in blank after repeating the mantra, or does one keep it in a circle going continuously?

A. Brother, the first thing is that you should always ask your own Master what you are supposed to do. But, since you are asking me, I would like to comment, but I would not like to put you off from what you are already doing. You see, we should try to repeat the mantra while keeping or holding our attention here, between the eyes, in the darkness, and we have also to visualize our Master's form, because our mind will not stick here unless there is something to hold onto. So we contemplate on the form of the Master and repeat that mantra, and then only, slowly and slowly, do we withdraw to the eye center. It is a constant struggle with the mind. You do it, and your mind will forget it; again you do it and your mind forgets it again. When you make a habit of concentration, then automatically your mind will come back to this point.

Q. Concentration and meditation?

A. Meditation is a general word or term. It covers everything which concerns what we do for our spiritual progress. It has three parts; Simran, Dhyan and Dhun. Simran means the repetition of the Holy Words. The purpose of it is to withdraw the attention currents up to the eye center. Dhyan is contemplating on the form of the Master in order to hold our thoughts at the eye center. And Dhun is Shabd or Word or Logos, with the help of which we have to go up. So everything is included in meditation. All this, combined, is known as Bhajan in Hindi, or Meditation in English, which actually means devotion to the Lord. Whatever practice we do to develop this devotion, that is meditation.

Q. 108. Master, again about the technique of meditation. Is it not true that the plugging of the right ear is only until one reaches the stage where the Sound is so clear that outside distractions are so non-existent that one can dispense with it?

A. That is right, sister. Plugging the right ear is necessary only in the beginning. When you are able to concentrate at the eye center and you are in touch with the Shabd, you do not need any plugging of the ear, for then you are automatically in touch with that and you are unconscious of your hand, your ear and of your whole body. When you hear that Shabd and it is pulling you, you are just to give yourself to it, and you will be *in* that Shabd. But the plugging of the ear is the right procedure of practice for a beginner.

Q. 109. This lady has suffered a hearing loss recently and she is very much concerned whether this will impede her spiritual progress?

A. Our hearing with these physical ears has nothing

to do with our spiritual hearing. Whether we hear anything with the physical ears or not, we have internal ears which we have to open to hear that Sound. As you have read in the Bible, Christ so beautifully said: "Ye have ears and hear not; ye have eyes and see not". So it is not these physical eyes which see within; it is not these physical ears which hear within. There is an internal ear, which is not physical, which hears the Sound. So, whether you are able to hear with the physical ears or not, is immaterial.

Q. (Here the deaf lady said:) I would love to hear what you are saying.

A. That is all right, but I want to tell you that you are not missing anything if you do not hear from the outside, through the physical ears. The thing worth hearing is inside. Give your attention to that hearing. That Sound inside will automatically pull you up and you will hear much better things than you were used to hearing outside.

Q. 110. Maharaj Ji, when the Sound within pulls one up, does the body have to have any support? Or does it just fall, just collapse?

A. No, the body does not collapse. It will stay as it is now, but you may not be conscious of the body. Normal functions of the body will remain the same, but you will not be conscious of the normal functions of the body.

Q. But if one is sitting in the posture and then it comes, and one just does not move the parts, but just stays?

A. Sometimes people cannot stand it and they do fall. They just lie down or they begin shivering sometimes. It may happen to certain individuals;

but generally, one remains in the same posture and just becomes unconcerned or unconscious of the body. But, sometimes, when you finish your meditation, you find that you are lying down, whereas, when you started, you were sitting. Sometimes the body does fall, but you are not conscious when you are falling. There is nothing to fear about that.

Q. 111. Do you think contemplation can be attained by anyone, or an ordinary person?

A. Everybody should try it, and everybody can try it. And that is what the Lord wants. But we can try only when He wants us to. That is what I said, without His grace nothing can be done. But we have to make the effort and not try to justify our failure to do so by thinking that when the Lord will want us to do so, we will contemplate on Him. We cannot put a condition that we will only beg of the Lord if we are sure that He is going to give to us. But it is entirely at His mercy; He can give us whenever He likes. When anybody in this world asks us for anything for, or five, or six times, we feel like giving it; so how can the Lord be unmindful if we are really begging at His door? The thing is that we must beg at His door. And we can beg only if we find the door of the Lord, and that door is here, between the eyes. We should come here—concentrate all our attention here—and beg from Him, and He will definitely give us what we want.

Q. 112. The Sound Current purifies? Do we connect with the Sound Current before Trikuti, or only after reaching Trikuti?

A. Sister, the purpose of the Sound Current, the Shabd, is to untie the knot of the soul and the mind,

and to take the soul back to its Home. Our soul has taken the association of the mind, and the mind has become the slave of the senses. With Simran and Dhyan (repeating the five Holy Names and contemplating on the form of the Master), we withdraw back up to the eye center. When we are in touch with the Sound, the attachment to that Sound detaches the mind from the senses and takes it back to its own original home, which is Trikuti. Without attachment to the Sound, the mind can never come back to its own origin, because the mind is fond of pleasures and every moment the mind runs to the senses. Unless we give the mind a better and superior pleasure to that of the senses, it will not leave the senses. In order to imprison our mind, subdue our mind, catch our mind or purify it, we have to attach it to the Sound. When it is attached to the Sound, all the dirt starts falling off and it gets purer and purer.

As long as our mind is being pulled down to the senses, nobody can be more inimical to us than our own mind, for it is our worst enemy. But when it is attached to the Sound, the Shabd or Nam inside, and it is on its way back to its own home, it becomes our friend, a real friend and real guide, till Trikuti. Then the soul gets released from the mind and merges back into the Lord.

When the soul leaves the mind at its own source, then the soul has pure love and devotion for the Lord, and its longing to merge back into Him increases. That pure love, devotion and longing takes the soul back to the Lord. The mind remains far behind in its own home, and all these karmas—actions and reactions, good and bad deeds—to which we are a slave in this world, they all remain with the mind.

That is how the soul becomes pure and merges back into the Lord.

Q. 113. The books say that the Master connects us with the Sound Current. That is not quite clear to me. It seems to me that if we were disconnected from this force we would not be alive, if you see what I mean? Is not the Sound Current the very life within us?

A. The Sound Current is the very life within us. It comes here with our mind, and the mind is scattered in the whole world, through the nine apertures of our body. We have to retrace it back up to this point, between the eyes, and be in touch with the Sound. The Master will put you on that path and will bring you in contact with that Sound. The Sound is always there. That Sound Current is always in the body, because that is the soul itself. Ultimately, the Sound, the soul and the Lord are all one. But the Master will *put our mind in touch with that Sound*, with that vibrating Sound, here at the eye center. He will put us on that Path, and we will practise and make the effort with his help and guidance.

Q. 114. In some teachings, they refer one to the mantras, the Om Sound, before meditation. We understand that our body has to be tuned first to the Sound which enters the heart and the vibrations come in closer and we are readier and the mind is easier to discount?

A. Sister, that is not a physical Sound. When we create sound by saying Om, Om, we are trying to copy that Sound. That Sound seems like that, but by repeating that sound, we are not in touch with the real Sound.

Q. 115. One thing I wondered about quite a lot is Sound. It sometimes seems like I have contacted it, and at other times I am not

quite sure. The sound I hear in my ears is ringing, and it is more or less continuous, and I wondered if it is a back echo, or what?

A. In the beginning you will hear that type of sound. You should give your attention to it. It is not a back echo, and with the help of Simran, when your mind is concentrated fully, here at the eye center, that very Sound will become distinct and clear, and you will feel its pull upward.

Q. 116. Master, each region has its own particular Sound?

A. Sister, the Sound is one, coming from the top of the head to the eye center. Since it passes through five regions, as generally five regions have been explained by the Saints, so we feel that the Sound is different at every region. Actually, the Sound is just one. For example, a river leaves the source and merges into the sea. At the source, it has a particular sound. When it passes through the rocks it has a different sound. When it spreads out on the plains, it has a different sound. All the same, the river is one. So, that Audible Life Stream, that Shabd, Nam, Nad, Word, Logos or whatever name you may give it, is just one, coming from the top to the eye center. Since it is coming through the many mansions in the Father's House, the Saints have tried to explain to us, as well as it can be done in mortal language, the different sounds at the different regions or mansions of the Lord. Actually, the Sound is one and the same.

Q. 117. This bothers me somewhat: Ramakrishna, Mahatma Gandhi and Saint Francis have never mentioned the Sound Current. How can you explain that?

A. I have no business to analyze any personality, nor to explain their teachings. I do not know

whether or not their teachings are rightly expounded or explained to the world. It is difficult to say. Perhaps you will say that Christ never preached about the Word, the Logos or the Sound Current, but I will differ, for when one understands his mystical terms, it is very plain, even in the Bible, from which so much has been suppressed. So it is very difficult to say whether those people knew about this or whether they concealed it, or whether their teachings have not been properly expounded to the public. It is difficult to say.

But if with an unbiased mind we make a research of the old writings of the East, especially of Persia, of the Arabic world and of India, we will find that they are full of the same teachings. Perhaps you noticed in the discourse given today that religions may appear to us to be different, with their different rituals and ceremonies, but the *essence*, the base of spirituality of all is the same. With the lapse of time, we forget the real essence, and what is left with us is just the shell. The rituals and ceremonies are not the real teachings; they are just the hold of the priestly class over us and nothing else.

So if we make a thorough research into the teachings of any saint, we will ultimately come to the same conclusion. Then, also, we may be thinking that someone was a saint, when actually he may not have been a saint. Who are we to judge? I do not know about Gandhi, because Gandhi was a politician. He blended spirituality with politics. He had a spiritual background, and with that background he took to politics. So he was a spiritual politician. He was not a saint. At least, in India, he is not taken to be a saint, from the spiritual point of view. I cannot discuss about

Ramakrishna, because I have not gone through his works. But I cannot believe that they did not know about the teachings of the Saints. There may be some reason for our not knowing whether or not they knew about them.

6. (ii) THE LORD'S GRACE AND LOVE

Q. 118. ——?

A. That is true, we will get His grace only when He wants us to get it. It is always there, but we are not always receptive to it, and it is He who makes us receptive. By His grace, we can have His love. We have to make the effort, do our spiritual practice, and it is for Him to give us grace. He does not withhold His grace when we are sincere and honest in our love and devotion. And all this meditation, all these spiritual practices, are simply to make us receptive to His grace. But only with His grace will we get such an atmosphere, such circumstances, that we can devote time to meditation; and that we will long to meet Him, as I said in the earlier meeting today. He is within us, everyone of us. Being within us, He gives us His own love. We think we love Him, but actually He loves us. It is He who creates that love in us. We are just responding to His love. The more we respond to His love, the more we feel His love in us. In fact, it is the Giver who is giving this love. We are not doing anything. We are just responding to what He gives us. The more receptive we become, the more love and devotion we feel within ourselves for the Lord.

Q. But the progress is in the hands of the Master, is it not?

A. As we have just discussed, it is a matter of grace. We have to put in our efforts. The Master helps us, the Lord helps us but we must make the effort. Progress we do get accordingly. As we make more effort, we get more grace to make more progress.

Q. 119. ——?

A. Sister, we discussed this question many times in your meetings. Actually, a disciple can never pretend faith. It is for Him to put us on the right path, to bring us face to face with Him. When we are sincere, when we want a Master, we will automatically follow the right path. He will make such circumstances that we will find that we are on the path. If we are following the wrong master, we will eventually slip out of that and find ourselves in the lap of the right Master. Automatically, the Lord will put us right. All we need is sincerity and honest longing to meet Him, to follow Him; then it is for Him to put us on the right path. There are outward signs too, but still the intellect can be deceived. Even though the books are full of all these hints, still the intellect may be deceived. So, for guidance, we can depend only on Him nothing else.

Q. 120. How does the idea of grace fit into this business of karma?

A. Sister, without grace nothing can happen. Grace means the grace of the Lord. Only by His grace will we come into a certain atmosphere where we can work our way up. Without His grace we can never even think about Him, and we would never know that the Lord exists. But He does not come into this world direct. He sends His grace through some means, through some instruments, through the Masters. As you have often read in The Bible, Christ said 'I have been sent by my Father. I have been sent for those marked souls, those particular souls that are ready to go back to Him.' That is His grace. When the Lord wants those sheep, those particular souls to be collected, to come back to Him, His grace is there

and the Master is sent to collect them. Without His grace, the saints or Masters would not come into this world.

Without His grace, we would not even think of the Lord, much less try to meditate. His grace is the first step in meditation. Without His grace, nothing can happen. But when we are sincere, when we want to work our way up, His grace also comes. If we go one step, He comes ten steps to meet us, but we have got to be sincere in our efforts. He always receives us with open arms, provided we want Him, we long for Him. Mostly we do not try to seek Him; mostly we do not try to have real devotion for Him. Even if we turn to Him, it is not for meeting Him but to achieve some wordly aims, desires and possessions. We want Him to fulfill all that our mind wants. We do not want Him for Himself. Very few people want Him for His sake. Most people have ulterior motives; they want Him because He can be a good instrument for fulfilling their desires. That is not wanting *Him*, that is not invoking His grace.

We should worship Him because we want *Him*, we love *Him*. The basis of religion is not fear, but love. We do not want to worship Him to escape from the ways of the world. We worship Him because we are in love with Him. And when you are in love with anybody, you just want to be with Him for the sake of love, and not for the fulfilment of any desires or worldly things. So, unless that real longing, that real yearning, comes within us and that real devotion takes place in our heart, we cannot achieve our destination.

People hardly pray to Him for His grace, for His blessings, for helping them to merge back into Him.

They usually pray to Him for their sons, their litigations, their wealth, their health and so many other worldly desires to be fulfilled. They never pray to Him for His sake, for Himself. They only want to make Him their means, an instrument to satisfy their desires. And who creates the desires? The mind creates the desires. And to whom are we praying to fulfill them? We are asking the Lord to fulfill our desires. We are not explaining to our mind to abide by the Will of the Lord. We are trying to explain to the Lord to abide by the will of the mind. We then serve the mind, not the Lord. Unless we completely surrender ourselves to Him, driving all these desires out of our mind, we cannot achieve our destination, because He will always give us what we want. We will have to surrender to Him. When we just want *Him* from *Him*, then only we can merge back into Him. So we have to create within ourselves that real longing and desire for, and devotion to Him.

Q. 121. How are we brought to meditation?

A. By the grace of the Lord. There is no other way. We may say that we have become devotees of the Lord because we have found the right teachings, we have found the path, we have found the Master. It would be quite wrong to think so. Actually, when He wants to put us on the Path, when he wants to give us His devotion, He creates such circumstances that we have no option but to follow that Path. We are ultimately drawn to the Path. It is all in His hands. When He wishes it, everything becomes clear to us. First is His grace. With His grace we will meet a Master. Through contact with the Master we

will be put on the Path, and with our efforts we invoke His grace to travel on that Path until ultimately our practice will lead us to our Home and we merge back into Him. Everything is interconnected. Without the Lord's grace, nothing can happen.

Q. 122. The decision that makes us decide to accept the Teachings? Where does that come from? From the soul?

A. No, that comes from our karma, the fruits of our association and sincerity in the past birth, to meet the Lord. It is due to our real and sincere longing to meet Him. Then it is for Him to put us on the Path. What we have to do is to have a real longing to meet Him. Whether we are following the right or the wrong path, if our longing is sincere, then the onus is not on us but on Him to put us on the right path. So, all these things taken together shape our destiny on the Path. That is what we call the grace of the Lord. It is through His grace that we get the opportunity to come on the Path. Actually, we have worked our way and thus invoked His grace to come on the Path in our previous birth, and that is how we find ourselves on the Path in this life.

Q. 123. Are we not all laggards to be here at this time? We are almost at the end; it has been so long?

A. We feel that we are at the end, and the people who have to come into this world after ten thousand years will think that we were at the beginning. We should be glad that we are on the Path which leads us out of this circle, this wheel of transmigration, back to Him. We are definitely not at the end. There are still more to come.

Q. 124. By grace, do you mean the Will of the Lord?

A. Brother, give it any name. Call it His Will, call it His Love, call it His Grace, call it by any name. Mere words do not count. His Grace is His Grace. It is His Mercy, His Grace, His Blessings that put us on the Path, and we refer to all this as His Grace. The name makes no difference.

Q. 125. Is not God's grace the power to shape all that we are destined to become?

A. God's grace is always there, but brother we have to become receptive to His grace. If it is raining very heavily and your cup is upside down, not a drop of water will get into it. You have to put that cup with the right side up, then it will be filled with rain water. So, God's grace is always there, within everyone of us, but we have to be receptive to that grace, and by receptive I mean that we have to withdraw our consciousness to that point where His grace is coming day and night. Unless we attach ourselves to that and unless we are filled with that love and devotion to the Lord, naturally these desires and attachments of the world will not go out of us. There is no limit to His grace, which is everywhere, but we have to be receptive.

Q. 126. How may we always keep our love for you in the first position, as our highest desire? How can we keep it there if we do not display it so much?

A. Brother, display is on the outside. The real love is expressed within. Meditation automatically creates devotion and love for the Lord. When we love the Lord, we also love the travelers on the same Path, and we all become nearer to each other. Supposing

you are away from your wife, and somebody comes from your wife. You like to talk to him about your wife, and he also becomes dear to you because he is talking about your wife to you, and you always like to hear about your wife. So he also becomes dearer to you. Similarly, saints or Masters always come and talk about the Lord and thus create His devotion in us. So they also become dear to us. We also love them. The meditation, as advised by the saints, creates this affection, love and devotion in us.

Q. 127. When you refer to Saints now in your answers, are you referring to gurus? There are other saints, are there not?

A. There are many saints. A Saint is a Saint, wherever he may be. Guru is a Sanskrit word, and it means 'teacher' or 'master'. Guru also means one who brings light into darkness. That is the literal meaning of guru, teacher or master, because he gives us knowledge, wisdom. After all, these are just words. All real spiritual Gurus are Saints, but all saints may not be Gurus or Masters.

There is a technical difference between a Saint and a Guru. Saint is one who has reached a certain spiritual stage and has become one with the Lord. He may not be authorized to initiate people upon the path. But a Guru, having the same spiritual status, is authorized by the Lord to teach, to initiate and take the souls back to God. Jesus says in The Bible that the Father hath given authority to the Son to execute judgment and to give unto you that meat which endureth unto everlasting life "for him hath God the Father sealed."

For example, an advocate and a judge both have the same legal qualifications but whereas the judge is

authorized to pass judgment, the advocate with the same qualifications has no such authority. But the words 'Saint' and 'Guru' in everyday language carry the same meaning.

Q. 128. Can you tell us more about love and how we can develop it in ourselves?

A. The more you give love, the more it grows. The more you share it, the more you will have it in abundance. The more we share it with His creation, the more He gives us, and the more we feel nearer to Him.

Q. 129. Master, love is very important on the path. Who helps to develop this love? Does the initiate really have to generate this love himself for the Master or will the Master himself help the disciple to generate love for the Master?

A. Brother, it is the Lord's gift. He gives it. We think that we love. Actually, He gives us His love. We think we love the Lord; but it is He who gives us His devotion and His love. He is within us. He creates that love and devotion within us so that we love Him. The love comes from that side, but we have to be receptive to that love. He has given us this bliss, this joy. Nothing comes without His grace. To be frank, it is He who gives us love.

Q. 130. Maharaj Ji says that we should be receptive to it. What is the best way to be receptive to it?

A. Well, the best way to be receptive is, when He would like us to be receptive, we will become receptive. He knows the ways and means to make us receptive. But, we have to read the literature, attend the meetings, help each other,

and devote the required time every day, regularly and punctually, to the spiritual practice. We have to *live* in Sant Mat, in that atmosphere. All these are means to be receptive to His love.

Q. But, if it is that, Maharaj Ji, the Master will make us receptive, then we need not have a feeling of guilt for being bad satsangis?

A. Sister, we should never entertain the guilty feeling of being a bad satsangi. As I told you, there are no failures in Sant Mat. You *are* going ahead. You *have* to go ahead. But we have to be satsangis, do not forget that. We should not forget the definition of a satsangi, and do our best to live up to it. The principles on which we have to stand, the time which we have to devote, there are pre-requisites of being a satsangi, what is expected of a satsangi. If we are real satsangis, we should have no feeling of guilt. Whether you are considered good or bad makes no difference as long as you remain a satsangi in the true sense of the word.

Q. 131. How does one develop true spiritual love for the Master and the satsangis, when he has grown rather hard in the business world and has almost forgotten brotherly love?

A. Well, when it comes, it just comes, that is it. You do not have to build it, you do not have to grow it; it comes. When it is His grace, it comes, it just comes. For putting forth the effort, so to say, we should attend to the meditation daily, read literature on Sant Mat, hear Satsang—which, unfortunately, you do not get an opportunity to do, and try to be in association with the saints. All these things help us to develop that love. But then, all these things can

be done only when His grace is there. So actually it comes back to the same thing that when He wants us to have it, only then it comes.

Q. 132. Master, can you tell us how we can increase our love for the Lord?

A. The main thing is that it is in the hands of the Lord. We get love when He gives it. But when we are attending to the meditation, the love comes automatically. And when actual love comes within us, all human qualities automatically come in us like cream on milk. You do not have to fight for those human qualities to get them. They just come. Love brings everything in us. Everybody has virtues in him. But love, the real spiritual love, brings out these virtues.

The difference in spiritual love and worldly love is this: In spiritual love you are not conscious of anybody except the object of your love, except your Master or the Lord. In worldly love you are always conscious of others, there is instinct of possession, and then jealousy comes in when you are conscious of others. In spiritual love, there can be no jealousy, for you have forgotten the whole world; whether it exists for you or not, you are just in Him. That is the difference.

Q. 133. A man named Walter Russel once said that God said to him, "All men shall come to me in due time, but theirs alone shall be the agony of waiting that day." Is this a correct statement?

A. Do you not think there is agony in waiting? We are all going through that agony of waiting. Every soul is the essence of the Lord. Unless we go back and merge into Him we cannot escape this agony.

Just analyze the people here in the States. You have all the material objects to your credit. And what have you not got for your comfort! Still you have not been able to say 'No' to agony or unhappiness. I think you have perhaps added to it.

7. MIND, SOUL, GURU

Q. 134. We speak of mind a great deal. Can you tell us exactly what mind is and its relationship to the soul, and why it causes us so much trouble?

A. Brother, I think I referred to this point a little yesterday. Soul is the essence of the Lord. Mind also is not a small thing. Its source is in Trikuti, the second spiritual stage. The soul, having separated from the Lord, has taken the company of the mind. Mind itself is not independent, for it has become the slave of the senses. The senses always keep the mind under their sway. So, being controlled by the senses, the mind does so many karmas—good and bad actions. The result is that the soul also has to reap the fruit of what the mind does, as long as it has the association of the mind.

Mind is the agent of Kal, the Negative Power, and Kal does not want any soul to get out of his reach. So with one trick or another, the mind always likes to keep us in the cycle of birth and death. The mind is a very obedient servant of its master. In its present state it is such a slave of the senses that it does not want us to go back, merge back into the Lord. Sometimes, as a friend, it tries to deceive us. Sometimes, as an enemy, it tries to threaten us. The purpose of the mind is to keep us astray, not to let us go back to our own original Home. So, we have to release our soul from the clutches of the mind.

Yesterday I tried to explain that in our body the seat of the soul and mind, knotted together, is in the center just behind our eyes. From here our mind is being pulled down to the senses. Mind is fond of pleasures, and unless we give our mind a better and

superior pleasure than that of the senses, it will not detach itself from the senses. And that superior pleasure is the Word, the Holy Ghost, the Shabd or Nam, which is within everyone of us, right behind the eyes. When, with the help of Simiran and with the help of contemplating on the form of the Master we try to withdraw and hold our consciousness at the eye center, then only we can be in touch with that Sound, with that Shabd, with that Nam. That attachment automatically detaches us from the senses. For example, a river is flowing. If you put a dam to that river, how long will you be able to hold the water? Perhaps a week, perhaps a month, and when there will be too much water, the water will break through the dam. The water will rush out over the banks. But if you put a dam there and you direct also the channel of the river into another direction, then the dam is permanent and the river starts flowing into another direction.

So we cannot give vacuum to our mind. We cannot control it by austerities. We cannot control it just by analyzing it or merely by suppression. By just withdrawing ourselves from situations, we cannot control it. We can only get temporary relief in that way. Just as you take a criminal and hand him over to the police, as long as he is in a police lock-up you are safe from his vicious doings. But as soon as he is released he does the same thing, if not worse. If, instead of handing him over to the police, you try to correct him to be a good man and explain to him, he is reformed, and you are safe permanently from his vicious doings. Similarly, we are not to suppress our mind in an attempt to detach it from the senses. Unless we attach it to something better

than the senses, the mind will never be detached from the worldly pleasures. We may try to control it by running away to the forests, by reading holy books, by giving alms, by going into seclusion or by rushing about, by escaping from situations, but in this way we get only temporary relief from it, and the moment it gets an opportunity it reacts and rebounds and again makes us dance to its tune.

We can only control our mind when we attach it to that Word, that Shabd, that Nam. Attachment to that, automatically detaches us permanently from the world. Then the mind goes back to its own origin, and the soul gets release from the mind. It is only then that the real love and devotion of the soul takes it back to the Lord. Socrates said, "Know thyself". It is only after the soul is released from the mind that it really knows itself. Then only does one realize "who am I". Only when we know ourselves we are capable of knowing the Lord. Till then we do not know our 'self' and, much less, who is the Lord. We are just under the sway of the mind.

Now the mind is our guide, our guru. Wherever it wants to go, we run after it. We are just following the dictates of the mind. Even our devotion to that Lord is also under the sway of the mind now. But then, when we know our real 'self', it will be pure devotion, pure love, pure faith of the soul in the Lord. That alone can take it back to the Lord.

Q. 135. What happens to the mind when we die?

A. Mind does not leave us, brother. The mind has piled up so many karmas, and according to our karmas, we are again given birth. The same mind and soul come back into another body. Another cage is ready

for the mind and the soul, knotted together; another prison is ready for the unliberated soul and mind. You leave one body, another body is ready for you. Here your relatives are weeping because you have left them. In another place in this world your new relatives are all joyful and happy and dancing because you have come. That is the only difference. Nothing else happens. We leave one house, we cut off our relationship with them, and we get another set of relatives. We forget the previous ones and we are in love with the new ones. That is all. That is what the mind does to us.

Q. 136. You mention that the mind and soul are different and inimical?

A. I discussed this in the evening meeting, yesterday that the mind is our enemy as long as it is pulling us down, pulling our soul down. Soul and mind are knotted together, and in the body their seat is behind the eyes, what you call the third eye or the single eye. From here we are being pulled by the senses, the trend of the mind is towards the senses. Mind has become the slave of the senses, and the soul, having taken the association of the mind, has become the slave of the mind. So the soul has also become the slave of the senses. As long as the mind is the slave of the senses, it is our greatest enemy. When we are able, by meditation, to withdraw the mind from the senses, and attach it to Nam or Shabd or the Audible Life Stream inside, the mind starts taking the soul along with it back to Trikuti, the origin or home of the mind, and in doing so, it becomes our best friend. Once the mind has reached its home, it stays there and the soul is free to go up and merge back into the Lord. The mind and the senses are the

dross, the filth and the coverings of the soul, and when it is released from these coverings it is its own pure 'self', and merges back into the Lord.

Q. 137. What is it that directs the mind in that direction?

A. You mean, what is it which pulls the mind from the senses and takes it towards its home? First, we have to understand why our mind runs to the senses. The reason is, it is fond of pleasures. Unless we give our mind better pleasures and better enjoyments than the sense pleasures, it will never leave the senses. The real enjoyment which can make us forget the sensual pleasures is that Word or Logos, or Audible Life Stream, which is in every one of us. When we concentrate our mind at the eye center and attach it to that, that attachment automatically detaches us from the senses. That is what pulls the mind away from the senses and will take it back to its own origin.

Unless the mind is attached, it can never be detached. I will give you an example: If a beggar is asking for a penny and he gets the penny, if you try to snatch the penny from him, he is prepared to fight and die for it. If you give him a dollar or a pound, he will just drop the penny. That is the nature of the mind. Unless it gets something better than the sensual pleasures, it will never leave the senses. We try to detach it by austerities, by secluding ourselves, by running to forest, by analyzing ourselves. We think we have conquered the mind. Actually, we have just got temporary relief from the mind, and that is the great deception, for the moment the mind gets a chance, it makes us dance on the hot coals. If we run to the forest for three or four years, we think we have conquered the mind. When we come back

to the world, we face the same faces again, and our condition becomes even more abnormal than what it used to be. Suppression does not help. The more we suppress the mind, the more it is aroused when it reacts. If we direct it into a different channel, we attach it to something different, then it automatically detaches itself.

For example: If you say to a girl that as you want to marry her to some person, she should forget her mother, her father, her sister. She may try hard, but she cannot succeed. However, when she falls in love with somebody, she forgets everybody else. That one attachment detaches her from all the other faces. She used to think that probably she could never live without her parents and it was impossible to forget them, but this one attachment makes her forget everything else. This is the nature of the mind. Unless we attach it to something better than the worldly pleasures it will never get detached from them.

Q. 138. We must be attached to Guru, the instrument to hold the mind, to direct the mind?

A. That is what we are discussing. That can be done by Simiran. It is a very long process to explain. Now our thoughts are scattered in the world, by thinking about things, and whomsoever we think about, those faces also appear before us. We are sitting here, and as you are thinking about your son, his face appears before you. So it is always the habit of the mind to think about something, always to contemplate on the forms of people, places or things. That is the nature of the mind. In the same way, we have to withdraw from all this by thinking about the Lord, by contemplating on the Lord. We with-

draw ourselves to the thinking center and attach ourselves to the Audible Life Stream inside. We have to withdraw up to this center, hold the attention here, and attach ourselves to the Shabd. In this way we have to detach ourselves from the senses. If you will read the books, you will find all this.

Q. 139. Does the mind have no virtue at all? Are all our intellectual pursuits worthless?

A. No, I will tell you. The intellect is a faculty of the mind, but we have to use it in the right direction. I told you that as long as the tendency of the mind is downward, it is our enemy. When its tendency becomes upward, it is our friend. So we are not to use this intellect to destroy the creation of the Lord or to hate each other or to destroy each other, or to become the prisoner or the victim of the senses. We are not to use the intellect for that purpose. We have to use the intellect in the right perspective, to seek the Lord, for which this intellect has been given to us. To love the Lord, to love His creation, that is the purpose of the intellect. Intellect is a friend when it leads us back to the Lord, and it is an enemy when it keeps us away from Him.

Yesterday I gave an example of the difference between an intellectual and a simple man. I said both of them want to go from Washington to New York. The simple man just asks anybody standing on the road-side for directions to go to New York. As soon as he is told, without making further inquiries, he just starts driving. If anybody else meets him in the way and says, "You are wrong. The road leading to New York is to the right", he just takes that turn. Somebody else comes

along and leads him in still another direction, and he just takes that turn. He is so simple that he follows whatever anybody tells him to follow. But the intellectual does not follow, does not pay attention to the first man, whatever he may say. He wants another ten corroborations. Then he will see a map, a guide, to determine whether the nine or ten men have told him the right way leading to New York. Once he is convinced, he drives a little and then he sees a milestone. He is convinced intellectually that this road leads to New York. He has not seen New York yet, but then he does not bother. Once he is convinced, he just drives on. His intellect does not lead him to New York, his driving leads him to New York. But the intellect becomes a help, once it is satisfied.

Intellect in itself is a great barrier in our way. We have to pierce the barrier of intellect *with* our intellect. That is why all this investigation, all this research. We should never just close our eyes and jump into anything. We must jump with eyes wide open as to what we are going to do. Even if we spend our whole life in trying to understand what we have to follow, I say the time is not lost, it is gained. In so doing, we are just boring down deep for our foundation. We are building on solid rock, and the deeper the foundation, the stronger will be the building. So even if the whole life is spent in trying to understand the right path, we should not feel worried. We should give full time to investigation. We should never jump with eyes closed, never make our decision with emotion or to please our friends, or whatsoever comes our way we at once jump to follow it, for then we are deceived, then we are deluded, then we are

unhappy. We must satisfy our intellect to the best of our ability. Whatever the Lord has given us, we must make full use of our intellect, but once we are convinced that this is the right path for us, this is the right guide for us, then we are not to worry with our intellect, but we should set it aside. What we need then is practice, faith and devotion. That alone will lead us back to Him, and not the intellect. So intellect is a friend only if we know how to use it.

Q. 140. You have mentioned mind several times, but what can the mind do unless you have the emotional maturity to train the mind to do one thing or another? Are the emotions closer to us than our mind is?

A. What is the mind and what is emotion, in your view?

Q. The emotions are those actions which we perform in spite of the mind?

A. No. In spite of the soul. Emotions are nothing but the expressions of the mind. All these instincts are nothing but the expressions of the mind. The intellect is with the mind. The emotions are with the mind. The soul is just being dominated by the mind. We do not know what soul is, in fact, because we are so much a slave of the mind. We begin to think probably that our mind is the soul. Actually, the soul is someting far superior to the mind.

Q. 141. What do you do then if you have a contradiction between your mind and your actions through your emotions?

A. That is a contradiction between your higher mind and your lower mind. What we call conscience, is itself an attribute of the mind.

Q. 142. What is emotion?

A. It is an instinct of the mind.

Q. So the label, emotion, is a part of the mind?

A. Yes.

Q. According to psychology and other teachings, this is not usually so.

A. That is unfortunate. I do not know about the old psychologists, the old philosophers; but now especially in the East, philosophers think that the soul is an entity different from the mind. First, they always thought that soul and mind were one. They never differentiated their soul from the mind. But now, as a result of their research, they have begun to think that soul is something different from mind. Generally, they are mixed up, as in Freud and others, when they say that there is no soul and that mind is the soul, that the terms mind and soul mean the same thing. Actually, that is wrong. Eastern philosophers have always differentiated the soul from the mind. As Socrates said, "Know thyself", what is that self that we have to know? That is the soul, which is our real self. This concept is very, very old with the East. It was so also with the West, and with the Greek philosophers, but it has been forgotten absolutely.

We can only know our self when we get released from the mind. For example, you see the ocean. Some of the water evaporates, becomes a cloud, and goes up; it becomes rain and comes down again. It merges into the ground, becomes mud, and dirt. At that stage the water absolutely forgets its real intrinsic value, its pure qualities, and thinks itself nothing

but the dirt. But again, with the heat of the sun it evaporates and leaves the dirt. Then it begins to realize, "That dirt is something else and I am something else. Unfortunately, having taken company of the dirt, I lost my identity. I thought I was part of this dirt." When it leaves the dirt, only then does it realize that its real 'self' is something different from the dirt. Similarly, it is when the soul gets released from the mind, that it really begins to "know itself." Then it realizes where its origin is, which is that Supreme Father, that cloud. Then it evaporates, leaves the dirt behind and merges back into the cloud.

Our soul is of the essence of the Lord. It has taken to the company of the mind, and the mind is a slave of the senses. Whatever we do through the senses, the soul has to take part in that, because it is under the sway of the mind. So we have just to reverse the process by bringing our mind under the control of the soul and bringing the senses under the control of the mind. The center between the eyes is the seat of our soul and mind knotted together, in the body. From here, our mind is being pulled down. If you forget anything, automatically you will touch your forehead to remember what you have forgotten. We all know that this place, between the eyes, has something to do with our thinking; so we have to hold the attention of the mind here and not let it come down to the senses. But we cannot keep our mind blank here, we must have something to hold the mind. And that something must be superior to the pleasures of the senses, because our mind is fond of pleasure. That superior thing, as was elaborated in today's discourse, is that Word or Logos, that Shabd, that Light, which is here between the eyes. Therefore, we

have to withdraw the mind up to this place, to be in touch with that Light, that Word. The pleasure of that Word or Light is so great that the attention automatically stops going down to the senses.

Q. 143. When the senses enjoy something in spite of the mind, do we say that it is contradictory?

A. No. The senses never enjoy anything without the mind. It is the mind that enjoys through the senses, for the senses in themselves are nothing. Unless the attention of the mind is there in the senses, there is no sensation whatsoever.

Q. Can the senses not enjoy it?

A. No, no. It is the mind that enjoys it. Say, your daughter or your son is in your lap. He has a body, you have a body, but your feeling is pure. It is not the bodies, but it is the mind in each body which is a slave of the senses. Unless the mind works, the body does not work. So it is the mind that has to be controlled. Christ said, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light". Where is that single eye which we have to open to see that light? Everything is within the body, and that 'eye' is just between these two eyes. You may call it a single eye, or third eye, or give it any name; but it has nothing to do with the physical eyes. It is at this eye center that we have to concentrate; it is this door which we have to open. There is no other door outside at which we have to 'knock' and open, in order to be in 'the church'. This, right from this center upward—the whole forehead—is the real church. And the 'single eye' is the 'door' of that church, which we have to open. Unless we open this door, we will not see

the light, we will not find our Path, we will not know our Path, and we cannot seek the Lord.

When the door of a house is closed, you always knock at it from the outside, and it is always opened from the inside, before you can get in. Similarly, the Lord is inside and we are outside. We have to 'knock' at this 'door', and when we knock at it by concentrating at this point, the door is opened and we get into the house of the Lord. Christ also referred to the human body as "The Temple of the Living God". He also said, "The kingdom of heaven is within you". We have to make a research in the laboratory of our own body by concentrating our attention at this point; knocking at that door, in other words; in order to travel on that Path, in order to seek Him, in order to find Him.

Q. 144. How can we determine the difference between promptings from our mind and the real promptings from you?

A. What you mean to say is whether it is the Master inside who wants us to do things or whether it is our own mind. It is always the mind which has cravings and desires. We have to lean on the Master within, to get rid of those cravings and desires. All lower tendencies are always of the mind. Even the devotion, the emotions we feel for the Lord, are also of the mind. The origin of the mind is Brahm, in Trikuti, the second stage. In our body, the eye center is the seat of the mind and soul knotted together. From here the mind is pulled down by the senses; and the soul, being knotted with the mind, is pulled down along with it and, has become a slave of the senses. This is the condition of the soul as long as it is knotted with the mind. So we have to

reverse the process in order to go back to the Lord. Our soul has to control the mind, and mind has to control the senses. Only then is the mind free to go back to its origin and the soul is released to go up to its original Home, beyond the home of the mind.

Whatever desires and cravings come within us, actually, are the play of the mind. But there are some good desires also. The mind also desires good things—good deeds to do in this world. Whether good or bad, all desires pertaining to this world bring us back into this world. Our karmas, whether good or bad, bring us back here. When we do so many things in charity, help people socially, economically and in some other ways, with the expectation of reward, we are building good karmas; but we will have to come back to this world to reap the fruit of those good deeds. Good actions and bad actions, *both* bring us back into this world. That is how we got this human form. If we had only good karmas, good actions to our credit, we would now be in heaven. If we had only bad karmas or actions to account for, we would now be in hell. But if we have good and bad combined, we get a human form. That is why you find so many ups and downs in this world. Some people have more good karmas and less bad karmas, so they are more happy and less unhappy; more rich and less poor. Others have more bad karmas than good karmas, so they have more unhappy days and fewer happy days in this world. It is the combination of good and bad karmas together, which helps us in getting this human form.

So, while being in this human form, we have to rise above these good and bad karmas; and we can rise above them only by devotion to the Lord, by

attaching the mind to the Sound or Audible Life Stream. The mind is flitting, wavering, always running after worldly objects because it is fond of pleasures. That is why it is a slave of the senses. Unless we give the mind something better than sensual pleasures, it will not leave those sensual pleasures, because detachment never creates attachment in us.

It is only the attachment to the Sound that creates detachment within us. That Sound, that Audible Life Stream, is here, at the eye center, and when we withdraw our attention up to this place with the help of concentration and contemplation on the form of the Master, we are able to hold our thoughts there. We attach our mind and soul knotted together to that Shabd or Word, that Sound or Logos. Its attachment automatically detaches us from the senses and pulls us up. That detaches us from all these desires and cravings. As long as the tendency of the mind is downward, these desires and cravings are always there. But when its tendency becomes upward, it automatically leaves these desires and cravings.

Q. 145. How can we determine if the impulse is coming from within or from the mind?

A. Sister, practically speaking, you cannot know. By meditation we have to develop to such an extent that we will know whether it is good or bad. Practically, sometimes, we do not know whether what we are doing is good or bad. We may think we are doing good, but actually we may be doing bad, harming ourselves. So it is difficult to discriminate which is good and which is bad. We can safely say that anything which is leading us to the Lord is good, and anything that keeps us away from Him is bad.

That is the only way we can determine whether this is right or that is wrong.

Q. 146. Maharaj Ji, in our literature we read very often that where mind and matter are active there can be no peace. Would it be possible for you to tell us what are the contributing factors to this situation?

A. This whole world, all these material things, are matter. And as long as mind is after this matter to achieve happiness, it can never find peace.

Q. Then it is mind's ambition to enjoy this matter?

A. Our mind tries to find happiness in these outside material things, in this matter composed of five elements —earth, water, fire, air and ether. That can never be achieved, because it cannot be satisfied with whatever it gets in this world. It shifts from place to place, from person to person, from thing to thing. It is always shifting, for nothing here is able to hold our mind permanently. When it is attached to Shabd, then only does it detach itself from matter. That detachment in itself gives peace to the mind. One who does not desire anything is the happiest. Rather, he would explain that he does not need anything. But one who desires and is always hankering after things is even more frustrated when the desires are achieved. Matter does not give the mind happiness at all. Only the Shabd gives lasting happiness. The Spiritual Path gives happiness to the mind and the soul. Matter is just another lure for the senses.

Q. 147. I would like to know, when one is meditating and the mind seems to keep wandering off without one's even realizing it, until finally one catches it, and no matter how hard one tries and keeps

telling oneself that it must concentrate, it seems that it just does not want to do so?

A. Well, the mind is doing its own work and you have to do your own work. How loyal it is to its superior, Kal, the Negative Power, when it does not let you concentrate! You have to be as loyal to your own Master by trying to concentrate. It is a constant struggle with the mind. You see, by doing a thing every day, punctually and regularly, we get into the habit of doing that. Take smoking for instance: You just start with one or two cigarettes, perhaps out of curiosity, then you find some pleasure in it, and when you continue daily, it becomes a habit. Then you become such a slave to that habit that you cannot leave it. By doing it again and again, you have become a slave to it and that becomes part and parcel of your daily life. You find it difficult even to try to leave it.

Similarly, we have to get ourselves into that habit of meditation, of concentration. Daily, regularly and punctually, we have to go on doing it, and ultimately we succeed. Then we would not like to live with ourselves, we would not feel happy, we would not feel that the day has been rightly spent if we have not given time to meditation. We are creatures of habit, and when once we get into the habit of trying to meditate, then that very habit will help us in concentrating. But in order to achieve this, we must struggle with the mind. It is a constant struggle for Light. It is not so easy. From age to age, from year to year our mind got into the habit of scattering out into this world. Everything is drawing us out, pulling us out. So naturally it takes time to withdraw the attention back up to the eye center and to con-

centrate. We cannot achieve these results with the American speed, I would say. (Laughter)

Q. 148. When I start on my Simiran I hold it for a while and my mind wanders out, and there is nothing I seem to be able to do about it. It is concerned mostly with the work I do—my mind keeps going back to it. It is not anything I am attached to exactly; I am interested in it, but I just—?

A. It is a constant struggle with the mind. The mind has gotten into the habit of wandering about, so through constant struggle we have to bring it back to this point. When you do that thing dialy—by practice, practice and practice—you will find that the attention also will begin to stay here, at this point.

Q. 149. Master, to what extent are satsangis, particularly new satsangis, permitted to experiment on the technique to controlling the mind?

A. I do not know what you mean by new or old satsangis and experimenting with the technique of controlling the mind.

Q. 150. Are we permitted any latitude in so far as trying various methods of repetition and other things?

A. There is only one method of controlling the mind, which is explained to us at the time of Initiation. We have to practise it whether we are an old satsangi or a new stasangi. It makes no difference. There is only one method to control the mind. There are not two methods. The mind is fond of pleasures, and unless it is attached to something better than the sensual pleasures, it does not detach itself from the senses. So we have to attach it to something better. Then only will it be detached from these worldly things.

Q. 151. Master, I think I was not clear in my question. I remember one Master, for instance, advocated the technique of putting marbles in a bowl as a method of keeping his mind on meditation.

A. You see, these are methods of constant struggle with the mind. Some people do not sleep in comfortable beds so that they will not sleep more than the required time. They want hard beds. But you cannot differentiate that this is for a new initiate or for an old initiate. Everybody has to fight his way to follow the Path. You have to devise your own method. But actually, the real practice, the real method is the meditation itself. You, yourself will feel what you want to do in order to be able to sit for meditation and do the spiritual practice. Some people have denied themselves food, saying to themselves, "I am not going to give you your food until you have spent your time in meditation". These are just your own ways of working on the Path; but the Path itself, the method of controlling the mind, is the same for everybody.

Q. 152. Is there any way for a person who is not yet initiated? Would it actually be a detriment to him to try to focus the mind before his application has been accepted?

A. No, there is no detriment about it. Everybody should try to control the mind, whether he is an Initiate or not. But the question is the method, how to control the mind? Some people read books and think that they can control the mind with Hatha Yoga or by doing some physical, mental or breathing exercises. Now, if you do not have a proper teacher to teach you these exercises, you may get into difficulties. You can even damage your mind. You may lose your mental balance, because you do not know

how to do them properly. If you start doing them by the book there is no one to guide you when some complication arises. The book does not and cannot speak to you. And then you have to get clarified what is written, so that is why it is always good to have a teacher. But that does not mean that because one does not have a teacher, one should not attempt to control the mind; for, when one attempts to do it, then naturally one needs a teacher, also.

Q. 153. What is the difference between stilling the mind and blanking the mind?

A. There is a great difference. If you try to blank your mind, it will never stay there; it will run out again. That is why I use the phrase, when we are attached, we are automatically detached. When we are attached, the question of blanking does not arise. We have something to hold us there, and that is the Shabd. Blanking can only be if we have nothing to hold us there. That is detaching by austerities, by discipline, and there is nothing to hold our attention there, but we are trying to withdraw from the world. That is a very temporary phase, after which the mind will react and rebound with even greater force.

Q. 154. What is blanking?

A. Blanking means negative thinking. "I, do not want this; I do not think about this; I do not think about anything; now I am blank; there is nothing in me.".

Q. 155. What if this happens automatically? Where is one's mind?

A. You will be conscious only of what you are thinking, so your mind can never be blank. It never

sticks here, at the headquarters, but runs out with one excuse or another. We only change the direction, the subject of thinking. It is never blank. If a river is flowing and you put in a dam, how long will you hold it back? When the water accumulates to such an extent that the dam can no longer hold it, the dam breaks, the water flows beyond the banks and even causes destruction. But if you put in a dam *and* divert the channel of the river, the dam is complete and permanent, and the water flows in a different direction. So when we are blanking, we are actually putting up a dam without giving our mind another outlet. We think we can control the mind by putting a dam, by withdrawing from the world, by withdrawing all thinking, by not letting it go to the senses. This is just another way of suppression, a negative way of trying to hold it there, and a temporary measure at that.

Only attachment creates detachment. Detachment does not create any attachment. When we try to hold the mind blank and do not give it another direction in which to flow, we think we have conquered it. But when it is too much suppressed, it reacts with even more vigor. The method of Sant Mat or the Philosophy of the Saints differs in that we have to attach our mind to a better object than the sensual pleasures. And that better object, the Word, the Logos, the Sound Current or whatever name you give it, is here, at the eye center. We have to withdraw our attention up to this point, concentrate it here and attach it to that Sound. That *attachment* will automatically *detach* us.

Q. 156. Just following this, I want to know, is there no advantage

then in cloisters, where people keep to themselves and are not distracted by the world?

A. Sister, there are two sides to that. Some people may be in a room, yet they are not there, because their mind is always running out. And there are other people who are moving about with everybody, yet their mind is not moving; it is somewhere else. So it is a question of the development of your mind. It does not make any difference whether you are in a cloister or outside, for you have to control the mind and not the body. If you have to imprison the body, then it may be a different proposition to avoid people physically. But you have to avoid them mentally. For example, if you are in a house but you are always suppressing the desire to go out with friends and all that, there is no sense in confining yourself in the house.

We have to train and develop our mind so that in whatever situation we may be, we are not affected by anything, because our attention is somewhere else. Naturally, we have mental stress, so we have to avoid those situations where we think we cannot stand them because we are weak and we may become a slave of an undesirable habit due to falling prey to temptations and attachments. We naturally try to avoid those situations. But that is not a permanent escape. We have to develop our mind so that wherever we may be thrown, we remain on our Path, on our Way, with our own self. Otherwise, that would be a suppression, and suppression is never good, for the more you try to suppress the mind, the more it reacts.

Sometimes the mind deceives you and violently reacts if it is suppressed too much. We should not have too much suppression as an escape, but gradually

develop the mind to such an extent that no situation affects us at all. That will be a much better state of mind. For example, if we put a snake in a basket, we save ourselves from its bite or poison only as long as it is in the basket. The moment it comes out, it is going to bite. On the other hand, if you take out its poison sac, you can put that snake around your neck and it becomes your friend. So we have to develop our mind in that way; not by escaping from the situation, as that is only a temporary relief, I would say. The moment our mind gets a chance again, it will create a hell for us, if it has been only temporarily subdued. Too much suppression does not let us remain even a normal human being. But, if we develop our mind by spiritual practice, that is just like taking the poison sac out of the snake. It then becomes absolutely harmless, and no situation affects us. Our main object should be to train our mind from that point of view.

Q. 157. Going back to the topic of controlling the mind, would a person blind or deaf have an advantage over the others in containing or controlling the mind?

A. No. Their minds may always be running about, thinking that they would like to have all that which people are explaining to them; or, wondering what they are missing; or desiring to have what others have.

Q. 158. Do we ever reach the height that we will not be attracted by mind again, to come down again?

A. Sister, if you mean by height the higher stage, where the soul merges back into the Lord, then you cannot come back; because the mind is not there. You leave the mind far behind in order to reach that

higher stage or place. The mind belongs to Trikuti, the second stage; but you go to the fifth stage to reach the Lord.

Q. In the beginning, I mean?

A. In the beginning there is always danger of our coming back. Even from the third stage, sometimes we come back. But after that there is no chance of our coming back at all. We continue to go slowly and slowly upwards.

Q. 159. If we left the highest place and we were attracted back down here, would there be a possibility that it might happen again and we would have to go through the whole cycle again?

A. No. Do not worry in the least. (Laughter)

Q. 160. Maharaj Ji, would you say that this disease of ego may be at least greatly attributable to the fact that we have become in the habit of identifying ourselves with the mind; a feeling that we are mind and not soul, and to the extent that we realize that mind is our instrument and we are soul, to that extent it consists in freeing us?

A. That is right. That is realization. Now we hardly differentiate between the mind and the soul, so we think that whatever our mind wants, our soul probably wants it. But then a time comes when we feel the soul never wanted it. It was something else that was wanting it. Otherwise, what the soul wants, it wants that always and it never wavers. The soul never feels frustrated with what it wants; but the mind does some time, feel frustrated with what it wants. The soul is happy when it gets what it wants. It is always happy there and it never likes to change. The mind always wants change and it always shifts from one thing to another.

Q. 161. Well, to the extent that we disown the mind, so to speak, to that extent we are at least showing some progress?

A. Brother, such a realization by a satsangi is itself a sign of progress. Then, working for it is progress. Achieving it is still further progress. Merging back into Him is the greatest progress.

7 (i) DESIRE, DREAM, HYPNOTISM

Q. 162. Maharaj Ji, we are told that one should have no desires in this life. I find it extremely difficult or almost impossible to live in this world without desires. I think even God has desires Himself in that He wants to see the satsangis and He wants love and devotion from them and He wants to love them. This is a desire on the part of God?

A. All right. Let us develop that desire then. There is no harm in this desire.

Q. 163. To get to the point, these desires, according to your discourse, are tied in with our intellect and our senses. I read in some philosophies that we must eliminate all desire if we are going to reach this point. Yet, it seems like we must retain a desire for this, which would seem to be a conflict?

A. You mean the desire to meet the Lord? When the devotion or the real longing and desire to merge back into the Lord will come in you, all other desires will be automatically driven out of you. You have to create that desire, just to merge back into Him; that desire should always be there. We have to channel our consciousness into that direction.

Q. Then one ends up with a desire?

A. Yes, the longing, the love, the strong desire to return to Him. For the lovers of the Lord, their only religion is Love. They do not bind themselves to any particular religion. They believe only in the religion of Love, which comes only from within and not from without. So it is immaterial to them whether you go to a church or to a temple or to a mosque. Their only concern is the real longing and love and devotion of the Lord. That comes by spiritual practice. That is what they

want and that is what is required of us. That is the only thing which will lead us back to Him, and that longing, that love, that desire we should always entertain.

It is not by becoming a Christian, or that from a Christian you become a Sikh or a Muslim. This conversion, this change of religion does not entitle us to go back to the Lord. The love, the longing, the desire to merge back into Him, our spiritual practice, that alone entitles us to merge back into Him, regardless of one's religious denomination. Saints give absolutely no importance as to what religion you belong to. They do not believe in conversion. Religions, as they exist today, are not practical religions from a purely spiritual point of view, as the essence has been lost, the Truth has been lost, and they are concerned only with the shells now. They are concerned mainly with increasing the number of converts from a commercial point of view. But the Saints are concerned only with the human values, the love and devotion for the Lord. That is their only concern. So the Saints are open to everybody, always. No Saint comes into the world to create a new religion, or to tell you about a new practice or method for reaching the Lord. There are no short-cuts here. It is the same Path which was, is, and will remain. Those who want to go back to Him, have to follow the same Path. It is as old as the human race, and is only for those who long for Him, desire to go back to Him, want to seek Him within. It is not for those who want to seek Him outside.

Q. Speaking of this desire, now, for instance——?

A. By desires is meant attachment to the worldly

possessions and worldly things, always hankering after them, and if we do not get them we miss them. That is desire. There is no harm in possessing worldly things, but our desire for possessions should not be to that extent that if we do not have them, we miss them day and night. That missing creates an attachment within us. And Shabd detaches us from all that. The possessions in themselves are not harmful. It it our attachment to them or our desire for them that is wrong. We should not analyze all these small things too minutely.

Q. 164. Master, will you please tell us what happens when a person dreams?

A. Dreams, mostly, are projections of our own mind. Whatever our daily associations with the world are, they come in one form or another in a dream; but sometimes we have a very meaningful dream. For example, something which is going to happen with you, you witness all that in a dream, and that something happens with you after some time. We have no explanation why, as that cannot be an association of our mind, because that thing has not happened and is yet to happen; so these are meaningful dreams but dreams are after all dreams, and it is not in our power to get them. So we should try to work for reality rather than depend upon dreams. Good dreams are good dreams, that is all; but there is no reality in them.

Q. 165. We know that the psychologists try to make use of our dreams.

A. This is what they explain: that dreams are nothing but association of the mind with certain things, that

our mind receives impression, and as we get a release in this state of semi-consciousness, that is in a state of sleep, all those impressions are projected to us as dreams.

Q. 166. Would you explain to us what are spiritual dreams?

A. That is what I tried to explain. Sometimes we have good dreams about things that have not happened so far and later these very things happen to us. These are, we can say, pure dreams or elevated dreams. If we have love for God, we attend to our meditation at the time of going to sleep, in addition to our regular time, then generally we get very good dreams, like flying over the hills and trying to reach a certain destination. These dreams have associations with the soul. The soul tries to get release from the body and tries to fly back to its origin, and because we have so much karmic load that we cannot do that while in the conscious state, the soul gets a little release in the unconscious state of sleep. As a result we have dreams of flying. We cannot. however, depend upon these dreams in any way.

Supposing you have a dream that you have met a friend tonight, a friend whom you have not seen for ten years, and you even dream under what circumstances you meet him. You are simply surprised because you have not thought about him then suddenly you find the next day all that happening—you are going to that particular place and experiencing all those circumstances and you meet him. Naturally, psychologists cannot give any satisfactory explanation as to why such dreams occur.

Q. 167. Do you mean to say that these spiritual dreams have some

connection with intuition? Meaning something you think about—it is not a dream—but it is something that you think about will happen and it happens?

A. After all, everybody does not have that intuition. It must be due to some purification of the soul that a thing that is going to happen, you feel that it is going to happen, or you know that it is going to happen. To some extent that comes as a development of your mind, development of your soul. You call it intuition. It happens sometimes, definitely.

Q. 168. I would like to touch on another subject which I do not think anybody has questioned you about here. For six years I have studied psychology. I became one of the finest hypnotists in the business, if I want to call it that. And Brother Replogle told me that the Master will not allow me to use this type of psychic therapy. Will you please elaborate on that?

A. This hypnotism, as you call it, is trying to dominate somebody's will power, controlling somebody's mind with your superior mind, and to make him do what you want him to do. That is all. It is never good for the man who practises it and never good for the man on whom it is practised. And this is far removed from spirituality. I do not think satsangis should ever dabble in these things at all. It is extremely detrimental to our spiritual practice as well as to the one who is hypnotized

Q. 169. What about self-hypnosis, in which a second party is not involved? You put yourself in a state of suspended animation and you probe your own subconscious and you can reach a level where you can see your last incarnation. If you go back further you can see your previous incarnations. Now, in this state, are you going up to beyond Trikuti or is this all residing in the subconscious?

A. No, no. Absolutely not! You cannot be beyond the first stage at all in those circumstances.

Q. 170. Where is the knowledge that they are receiving? Is it false knowledge that the mind is feeding out?

A. All the knowledge is coming from the mind. It is control of the mind to some extent, a sharpening of the mind, nothing else.

Q. 171. Well, is there any value in practising self-hypnosis to control the mind? One apparently can receive a high degree of control of the mind through self-hypnosis. Would there be any value in pursuing that as a stepping stone to—?

A. No. I do not think so. That would be a block in your way towards spiritual progress.

Q. Because, for example, a person who is highly developed himself in this, can sit still and immediately, with just his thought, stop all sounds. He cannot hear a thing from the outside. He can stop all body movement. If that could be achieved with the mind through self-hypnosis, could he not reach the eye center quicker that way?

A. No. It is a block. It is a definite block in spiritual progress.

Q. Why is it a definite block?

A. Because you would not go ahead at all. You would be lost, lost, just in that. At the most, you would see yourself. You would think that you are the master of yourself, you are God, and you would be just lost in that state and would not make any further progress at all.

Q. So one should leave self-hypnosis alone then?

A. I do not think we should allow ourself to be

hypnotized, nor should we try to dabble in these things. Absolutely not! Those who do, generally meet with a terrible fate. If we analyze what has happened to those who dabbled in hypnotism or spiritualism, we find that their end is tragic. It is difficult to describe what they have to face at the end of life, or even much earlier.

Q. 172. Master, would this also pertain to telepathy, between two persons, the mind?

A. Telepathy is something natural. Sometimes you feel you are going to meet a friend, and suddenly you meet him at a corner. Something told you within that you were going to meet him or see him. It comes, but that is something different. This intuition also, after all, is also of the mind. Call it intuition or give it any other name.

7 (ii). EGO

Q. 173. When we speak of "I" this, "I" that, is this particular personality speaking, is this a true "I" speaking, or is this a false "I"?

A. Brother, it is mind that is speaking. All that we say is "mine", is "I", is of the mind. Our soul is dominated by the mind. Mind has ego, and that ego brings the "I"-ness in us. But when the soul will have the upper hand over the mind, then everything will be "thine". You see, minus ego is all "yours", meaning the Lord's; with ego, is all "mine".

Q. Carry this a little further. Now, if we say I read a certain book, for instance; or I say I am going to do this, I am going to do that or I am going to get Initiation, I think this and so on; what is this? This has to be the soul to make that decision, does it not? Mind would not want us to do that, would it?

A. Do not confuse language with "I-ness". This is our way of speaking, "I am going to do". It is a mode of expression. But the "I-ness", the instinct of possession, the ego, that is something different.

Q. I see. In other words, then, whenever we use this personal pronoun it does not mean that it is the ego or the false "I" speaking?

A. No. When I say, " am going today", it does not mean the ego is speaking. It is just an expression. After all, this body has to be referred to as something. But "I-ness" is something different. That is the instinct of possession: Mine, "This is mine", "This is my son", "This is my wife", "This is my country", "This is my wealth". When the instinct of possession overpowers you, that is "I-ness".

Q. 174. If the soul is, as we say, responding to God, responding to spiritual vibration, then that overcomes this over-excessiveness of "I"-ness?

A. Then we begin to think that everything belongs to the Lord, "I am only playing my part. Nothing is mine. Everything is His". It is not the language; it is the feeling within; it is our attitude. We are mentally detached from those things. Our attachment is with the Lord. That is the main thing required, not the words. Words are just a means to express our thoughts.

Q. 175. How is it that we can erase this veil of ego since, especially in this western civilization, the "I" seems to be the dominant pronoun? Can we erase it by praying to, say, "we", not only say, "we", but also praying with the thought of being united with others within?

A. Brother, first I assure you that ego is not more in you or in the West than it is in Indians. You have the instinct of possessions because you have them. We have the instinct of possessions because we are trying to get them. We do not have them. But as far as the ego is concerned, it is the same here, it is the same there. There is absolutely no difference. Some people have possessions and some people are dying to get them; but practically, the ego is the same. It is the attitude of the mind. The ego is the instinct of the mind, so we have to conquer our mind. We have to subdue our mind before we can drive the ego from us. As I have said so many times, the mind is fond of pleasures. Unless we give our mind better pleasures than the pleasures of the senses, the mind never leaves the desire and craving for possessions in this world. Therefore, saints always advise us to

withdraw our mind by Simran, by Dhayan, back to the eye center, and to attach it to that Sound, to see that Light. When we are attached to that, we are automatically detached from the senses, the desires and cravings for possessions.

The Lord has provided the means of attachment within us. When we attach ourselves to that, we automatically detach ourselves from the worldly things and worldly objects and faces. The ego will naturally, automatically, go out of us. Then we are not attached to this world. Then we are attached to that Love, to that Nam, to that Shabd. Devotion to the Lord comes in. When devotion to the Lord comes in, that devotion, that faith, that love of the Lord drives everything else out of us. So we have just to develop that devotion, develop that love of the Lord within us. When that love is there, the question of ego does not arise. After all, mind is the same, whether you pull it down, or whether you take it up. When the mind is up, it cannot be pulled down.

Q. 176. Then the way of diminishing the dominance of the ego, aside from that in ordinary life, is to think in universal terms?

A. The only process of driving out ego from within us is to attach ourselves to that Sound, attach ourselves to that Light. Unless we are attached to that Shabd, or Nam, we can never detach ourselves from this world, from nation, friends, relatives, possessions, gold, dollars. Only attachment can create detachment. When the mind is attached to something better than the senses, then we do not have ego in us. Ego is in us only as long as the love of the Lord is not in us. When the love of the Lord takes its place, there is no place left for ego.

Q. 177. How can I kill the ego in me?

A. Well, brother, that is a moot question and a very important question. Ego comes with the mind. This is the instinct of the mind. As long as ego is there, the soul can never go back to the Lord. We can drive that ego from within us only when we see that Light, when we hear that Sound, the Word of God, the Holy Ghost. You may give it any name. Every Saint has tried to explain the same thing. Guru Nanak described it as Bani, Gurbani; Muslim saints as Kalma, Ism-i-Azam, Kalam-i-Ilahi; Chinese philosophers call it Tao; Greeks have given it the name of Logos; in the English Bible it is called the 'Word'. The same thing has been described by different names. That power, that Audible Life Stream is within every one of us, here, at the eye center. We have to withdraw up to that eye center to merge into that Sound, to merge into that Light. Attachment to that automatically detaches us from the senses.

The more we travel on the Path, the more humble we become. The more we get the devotion and love of the Lord within us, the more humble we become. The more we are in love with the Lord, the more we realize His Greatness and the more insignificant we are in our daily life, the more humble we become. The more we are away from Him, the more the ego increases and we think 'I am doing it', 'I am supreme'. When we find the real Supreme, we know how humble we are at His Feet. Then the real humility comes. That is why Christ referred to the meek and humble of heart. Every saint has tried to tell us that we have to develop that humility in us. Guru Nanak said, "I am a slave of the slaves. My actions are very, very low". Such is the humility of the saints, which

comes only by devotion and love of the Lord within us. When our whole body is filled with love, the ego is gone and only humility and meekness remain. When that love and devotion is not in us, the whole body is full of ego. We have to detach ourselves from the world and attach ourselves to Him. Only by the spiritual practice, only by that meditation, can we kill the ego.

Q. 178. Master, how may we safeguard against the intrusion of unexpected or unrecognized ego when we attempt to judge ourselves, like if we are attempting to make certain improvements in our character, in our life, in our efforts? How may we reach some sort of balance, so we do not give ourselves too much credit and yet do not chop ourselves too low?

A. Brother, it is a life-long struggle; it is very difficult to know when ego is there and when it is not there. Sometimes, when we make a research of our humility, we find it is another form of ego. So, when we think that we have no ego, actually we have it.

Q. That is the tricky thing about it and I have been wondering, are we supposed to judge ourselves at any time?

A. We have just to try and then His grace is always there.

Q. 179. Maharaj Ji, can you give us some criterion or some sort of sign that lets us know that we are too self-important? The great disease is the disease of individuality or self-importance?

A. Ego, you mean?

Q. Yes, how can a satsangi be made to realize when that disease is too strong in him or her?

A. That disease is very common and strong in everyone of us. But for that disease, we would not be

in this world. The fact that we are here is a clear indication that we are victims of the disease of ego, and the disease of ego will go from us only when we are attached to the Word, to Shabd or Nam. That drives ego from us and creates humility within us. This Shabd or Nam drives out the "I"-ness from us, what we call "I", "I", "I". Then we just become Thou. For example, when we are in love with someone, we never like to do what we want; but we always like to do what he wants or she wants. We are always in readiness to please the other party, crushing our own views, fighting our own views, adjusting them to the other one. The same principle is in meditation. When we merge into the Shabd, when we fall in love with our meditation, with devotion to the Lord, to the Master, slowly and slowly and automatically this "I"-ness is being driven out of us. We take pleasure in merging, in blending into Him, rather than making Him bend to our dictates. This ego is automatically driven out.

Without attachment to Him you can never be detached from anywhere in the world. Attachment to worldly possessions, attachment to worldly faces, is ego. First we always look at things and a distinct impression comes in. Then we want to possess them. In order to possess them we work hard. Then we find that we are a slave to them. For example, a spider has woven its own web happily, and when it has woven it so beautifully, it finds that it has become a prisoner of it and cannot escape out of it. And that is what I think we are doing. We are making so many scientific investigations for modern worldly achievements, working hard day and night; we are weaving our own net and ultimately when we get all that, we find how

much a prisoner we are of these things. They have possessed us. They have taken us and we have no more freedom. Then we find it difficult to get out of that net. That is ego. We can break that net only by Shabd, meditation or Nam.

7 (iii). MIND AND SOUL

Q. 180. We are all the slave of our mind. Mind somehow drives us to all kinds of searches away from—?

A. The soul is of the essence of the Lord and it has taken to the company of the mind, and the mind, in turn, is the slave of the senses. So our soul has become the slave of the senses along with the mind. Unless the soul leaves the mind, it cannot know itself, nor can it go back and merge into the Lord. It can leave the mind only when the mind returns to its own origin. All the effort of meditation is for the purpose of getting the soul released from the mind, to unknot the mind and the soul, which are now knotted together. We just unknot them, by freeing the mind from the senses, which enables it to go back to its home and take the soul along with it. When the mind merges back into its source, the soul is free to go up to its own Home and merge back into the Lord. It is just that simple, but definitely not easy as long as the mind is the slave of the senses.

In the body, the eye center is the seat of the soul and mind knotted together. From here our mind is being pulled down to the senses, and from this very place it can also be taken up. But first we have to collect or concentrate all our attention up to this very same point and to contact that Shabd or Nam or word within it. When we are attached to and merged into that Shabd, we find that pleasure much superior to the pleasures of the senses, and with the help of that Shabd, we have to go back to the origin of the mind, which is Trikuti, the second spiritual stage. When the mind goes back to its origin, the soul automatically gets released from the mind. As Socrates

said, "Know thyself", it is only then that we realize what we are and truly "Know our self". Now all that we are saying is under the sway of the mind, for the mind is controlling the soul. But then, when we "Know our self", the soul controls the mind and we can really say that we are God, "Whatever Thou art, so am I". So, potentially, every soul is God.

Q. The trouble is the mind?

A. The trouble is the mind, that is right.

Q. **181.** Maharaj Ji, what about the force that is sometimes exerted by the universal mind in, let us say, having it motivated by the impulse of the Supreme Creator like, for instance, the power of love is greater than the love of power? The Supreme Creator and the universal mind are two, or not two different things? There is a division there?

A. You can say, "Mind, pure mind, and still purer or refined mind". After all, mind is mind. We can say, "Soul or God". Soul and God is the same, ultimately. Mind and universal mind is the same thing. The individual mind comes from the universal mind and merges back into the universal mind. You can call it essence of the mind; ultimately it comes to the same.

Q. But the mind, the universal mind, can control—probably it is Kal, the Negative Power?

A. That is right.

Q. Can control individual souls?

A. The soul has taken to the company of the mind and has become the slave of the mind, so mind is controlling the soul at this stage. Now the exact position is that mind is controlling the soul, and mind

itself is the slave of the senses. We want to reverse the process. We want the soul to control the mind, and the mind to control the senses. So by meditation, we have just to reverse the process, to enable us to merge back into the Lord.

Q. 182. How can soul be aware of itself without mind?

A. It can be. The soul has the power of direct perception and the mind is supposed to be only its instrument for functioning in this world; but the instrument has taken the upper hand and has itself become the slave of its own instrument, the senses. So that is why I say, unless the mind merges back with the universal mind, and the soul gets released from the mind, the soul will never know its Reality. But at this stage, as long as the soul is a prisoner of the mind, it is only with the help of the mind that the soul can go back to its origin. Mind is our greatest enemy as long as it is the slave of the senses, for it is constantly being pulled down from the eye center to the senses, with one excuse or another. Its tendency is always towards the senses, and it is always trying to find justifications for this, not realizing that it is a slave of the senses, and is our worst enemy.

When, through meditation or concentration, the attention collects at the eye center and, with the help of Nam or Shabd it returns to its own original home, there can be no better friend than the mind. When it is on its way back to its own home, it becomes our friend, because only when the mind is on its way home, can the soul also be on its way along with the mind. They are knotted together until the mind reaches its own home, and it is only then that the soul is released and is free to go on up to its Source. So we

have to convert this energy into the channel leading upward instead of downward. Mind is a very powerful friend when it has devotion for the Lord. So the Master gives us the key, puts us in touch with the Sound, and with the help of that we have to convert this enmity into friendship. Then the soul automatically goes along with the mind to the mind's origin, leaves the mind at its own source, and continues onward to its true Home. Therefore, ultimately we have to leave the mind—drop it. Then only can we go back and merge into the Lord.

Q. 183. Is it possible that good can come from certain types of spiritualism? Can there be two spirits... ?

A. In spiritualism you never contact any soul. All that you contact is your own mind. It becomes your medium and tells you all that. Initiates should not dabble in spiritualism at all. It is absolutely no good. The fate or end of the spiritualist is terrible.

Q. 184. Well, I think Sant Mat says the mind will never comprehend the pure spiritual regions. If the mind could figure that out, there would be no reason to meditate?

A. That is right. This mind and intellect have a limited way of thinking. That can take you only to a certain extent, but not beyond their own level. All our reasoning, our thinking, our intellectual discussions, are just with the mind.

Q. I know, we need to accept, but one still wonders—

A. Even this acceptance is that of the mind.

Q. 185. But even in our daily life we have insights and ways of knowing ordinary things; that is, superior knowing than trying to figure out the why and cause and the effect of certain circumstances,

and we use a faculty that takes us much nearer to the point. So why not try to understand the enormous things?

A. No. As long as the intellect is there, it has to be satisfied. "Why" and "How" are kings of this age. We call it the scientific age. So, "Why" is the first thing: "Why" should I do? "How" should I do? Because the intellect is there, we must try to satisfy the intellect, at least to some extent; otherwise, it will not let us try to meditate. Intellect is a great barrier in our way and we have to pierce this barrier with the intellect itself. Unless the intellect is satisfied, our mind does not go at all on the path of meditation. So we have to satisfy this intellect *with* the intellect, by these things. That is the purpose of all these discussions, all the satsangs, all this literature, all these group meetings. It is for no purpose other than to satisfy the intellect. Saints will just tell us, "Do it", and we should start doing it; but we do not unless first we satisfy the intellect. We must first be satisfied that it is the right path and it can lead us to the Lord. So, we have got to satisfy our intellect, but intellect does not solve all our problems nor answer all our questions.

Q. 186. Well, then the reason we do not eat meat or we do not take alcoholic drinks or we accept you as Master is largely an intuitive knowing?

A. That is right, but we still try to satisfy ourselves that we have done it intellectually. These decisions are made on a much higher level. But in order to satisfy ourselves, we always say that our intellect has done it.

Q. 187. Master, when the intellect is satisfied that it is more or less

proper, then one can really begin to get into the meditation? And with cooperation; in other words it does not fight?

A. Then, sister, faith and practice will take us there, not the intellect. If you bring intellect in the way, it will be a barrier. We have to satisfy the intellect with the intellect and then leave the intellect. Then what we need is faith and practice. If still you will bring intellect in your way, then you can never practice. But if an intellectual man is once satisfied, though it may take him a long time to start, he is generally never misled.

Q. He is building a foundation, really, is he not?

A. That is right, but his intellect does not help him on the way. His intellect does not take him to the Lord. He will have to satisfy his intellect first, but after that it is his practice and faith which will take him to the Lord. So we should try to make as much investigation as we want to or possibly can before coming to the Path. Even if our whole life is spent in making investigation, it is not time lost. It is time gained. But once you have satisfied your intellect that this is the right Path, then you should not be intellectually always thinking about this thing or that thing. Then what you should do is the spiritual practice. Then you should give more attention to practice. The reading of literature and attending group meetings is just to create devotion in you, to create that atmosphere in you, to create something in which you have to live for meditation. Then you do not need all of these things to satisfy the intellect, you want them only to develop devotion in you so that you remain on the Path. To satisfy the intellect in the beginning is necessary so that it may not become a

stumbling block in our way, but the intellect itself will never help us.

Q. 188. Maharaj Ji, could you elaborate a little bit on how we go about dedicating our mind, our body, our wealth to the Master?

A. Dedicating all these things is simply meant for the purification of our mind, to detach ourselves from our body, to detach ourselves from the wealth and to attach our mind to the Shabd. What you are referring to is the three types of service. Service with the body it to subdue our ego, our self-importance. When we do some social service, under the instructions of the Master, and move shoulder to shoulder with the common man much of our pride and I-ness is eliminated, and we feel on the same level as any other man. Too much wealth and attachment to it leads to many unhealthy desires and habits. The Master does not want our wealth but when we spend it under his instructions in acts of charity and so forth we are detached from it to a great extent. Service with the mind is to do our meditation and live in the teachings of Sant Mat.

8. INTELLECT AND FAITH

Q. 189. Should we strive for intellectual knowledge? Is it not inclined to interfere with spiritual progress?

A. Intellect is very good to live by in this world. We know the ways and means to spend our life comfortably with the help of intellect. But intellect does not lead us to the Lord. We have to leave the intellect in order to follow that Path. What we require is practice and faith. I do not say an intellectual man cannot follow the Path. Intellect is a barrier in our way, no doubt, but we have to pierce this barrier with the help of the intellect. Unless the intellectual man is convinced that the Path is right, he will never follow it. He can never have faith in the Lord as long as his intellect is not satisfied. But once his intellect is satisfied, he does not need intellect to follow that Path. What he needs then is faith and practice.

I do not say that intellect is not required. For an intellectual man, intellect is required in the beginning to understand everything. But a simple man can also follow the Path. He does not require the intellect to be convinced, but as he does not have much of a foundation, he can be led astray. The intellectual man is not led astray. Once I am convinced that this is a horse—it has all the signs of a horse—and I am intellectually convinced that this is a horse, even if the whole world tells me that it is a buffalo, I am not going to believe it. If to a simple man two people say that it is a horse, he will say, "Yes, it is a horse". Then if another ten people say to him that it is a buffalo, he will say, "Yes, it is a buffalo". The simple man is easily shaken. We do need intellect, but intellect does not lead us any-

where. Ultimately the faith and practice will lead us to that destination.

Q. 190. How does one know when one is beyond the intellect? Can one be tricked in that also?

A. We will go beyond the intellect only when we are able to subdue our mind. The intellect is a faculty of the mind. So we have got to control our mind, remove the veil of mind from our way, for then only we go beyond the intellect and "Know ourself", as Socrates pointed out when he said, "Know thyself".

Q. 191. Can the intellect ever fully understand the teachings of Sant Mat?

A. No. I would say to understand the real teachings of the Saints is to experience them.

Q. 192. I am thinking in particular of reincarnation. How can one satisfy oneself to this, intellectually, without first going back and meeting or seeing our former life? How can we justify reincarnation intellectually?

A. When we find so many ups and downs in this world, when we find so many disparities, the rich and the poor, so many diseases, so many born blind, crippled, idiots, we definitely start thinking why everybody is not equal in this world, why everybody has a different destiny and different fate? We ponder and wonder, and then we think about the past. We can find no other explanation but reincarnation, karma. They must have done something in their past life for which they are in that condition now. Otherwise, how could the Lord be so unjust to them and good to others? Whatever they have sown, they are reaping now.

What is destiny or fate? It is something with which we are born, something that we have to face during our life's span. That is the "original sin" with which we are born, the reactions of past deeds that we have to fulfill in this life. If we accept the theory of "original sin", destiny or fate, we have to accept the karma theory also, and we will accept reincarnation too. There is no other explanation.

Q. But one cannot accept it intellectually. There is no proof?

A. You see, all these things you are only trying to understand intellectually. I have just said that to know the teachings of the saints we have to experience them. We try to think with the intellect. We have to satisfy the intellect *with* the intellect. I said that the intellect is a great barrier in our way. We have to pierce through it with the intellect. So these are the logical explanations of our intellect about reincarnation.

Q. 193. There are many different ideas about God, what God consists of, what God is. Do we reach a point where we really understand God?

A. Not by intellect in any way. When we go beyond it, then we will know what God is. To know Him is to merge back into Him. That is the only way to know Him, and not intellectually.

Q. 194. I was wondering, you say that we must use our intellect to be sure we are not led astray by someone who claims to be a Master, and be sure intellectually; then to leave our intellect aside. At the same time do you not say that we have to accept the theory or reincarnation?

A. No. I say that we have to accept all these theories now, with our intellect. But to be able to under-

stand them fully, we have to experience them. As long as the intellect is there, we have to satisfy ourselves intellectually about these theories.

Q. But, can we ever be sure of that intellectually?

A. We will be sure as far as intellect is concerned. Beyond that we cannot be sure unless we experience it. How are we sure about the Lord? Only intellectually. We are not sure through experience. So we have to accept these theories intellectually or reject them intellectually.

Q. 195. This gentleman asked about reincarnation and the intellect. If the intellect could prove scientifically that reincarnation is true, could this work to the detriment of the soul? Could it be that if the intellect could prove to itself scientifically that reincarnation is true, that it might try to work on improvements for the next birth here, and not try to go back home?

A. No. But how can we be sure that we will be able to practise, have more spiritual practice, if we get an extra human birth? Rather we should make use of this birth. Why not make use now of what we are trying to postpone to another birth? This is just an excuse to escape the duties in this life.

Q. True, but the intellect might turn in that—?

A. Well, intellect can do anything. It can create atom bombs to destroy all of you. Do not think about the intellect. We are all its victims.

Q. 196. In the early beginnings, at least, there are doubts that arise in our contacts with those around us in our work and regular living. Are those doubts of great hindrance to progress?

A. Brother, I said the other day that if we have doubts, they definitely stand in our way of progress.

Our mind *must* be satisfied before we can make progress. That is why I always insist that applicants must satisfy their intellect before coming to the Path. After that, they should not let the intellect interfere in their progress. Then all that is needed is devotion, meditation, practice—nothing else. Doubts have no place on the Path. Once we have accepted it, then we know. Then we need practice and devotion—no doubts, no questions. They are automatically resolved. As long as there are doubts, we should try to clear them. We *must* clear our doubts, otherwise they gradually become a stumbling block in our way.

Q. Well, sometimes one reads so many things and becomes confused?

A. Then, try to get rid of that confusion. (Laughter)

Q. 197. Would visits of the Master to various countries make meditation easier?

A. That is what I am trying to explain. As long as our intellect is satisfied, meditation is always easier. When we are still involved with the intellect, meditation is very difficult. It is with spiritual practice that the devotion comes, progress comes, everything comes. All these group meetings, all these books being published, all these discussions, are just to satisfy the intellect, nothing else. They are merely means to an end, not the end in itself; but they are very stong means.

9. THE NEED OF A MASTER, PEACE, LOVE, HAPPINESS, INITIATION

Q. 198. Is there no other way to God-realization except with the help of a Master?

A. Brother, for whatever we learn in this world we always need some teacher, someone who has the knowledge of that subject. You have met so many doctors, so many advocates, engineers, and none of them have become doctors, lawyers or engineers simply by going to the laboratory or by reading books. Even after spending many years in schools and colleges, they have to go for practical training before they can make any headway in that line. For this worldly knowledge, worldly gain, we have to go to teachers, to learn from them. And spirituality is the most difficult subject. For this we need a Master, a teacher in spirituality. He tells us why we have to meet the Lord and where the Lord is; how to find the Lord; what is between us and the Lord that keeps us away from Him; and how to remove these coverings, these barriers between us and the Lord. You may call him Master, teacher, elder brother, friend. These are just names given to recognize somebody in this world.

The word, "Master", should not confuse us at all. We may call him a teacher or by any name, but we must have somebody to put us on the Path, to tell us about the Path. There are so many obstacles in the way. There are so many temptations to lead us astray. Unless there is somebody to guide us and keep us straight on that path, we can never travel on it. This is what we know outside. Internally, it is even more difficult to travel without a right guide, without a proper teacher. There are so many temptations

inside. We find so many stumbling blocks when we concentrate and come here, at the eye center, to follow our spiritual journey inside. Without a guide we will be lost. When we need a teacher in this world to learn so many things, why should we not need a teacher to go in and follow the real Path to our Home? If there had been no need of having a Master, then there should have been no need of any Saint to come to this world.

You know how we are influenced by the company we keep. If we keep the company of good people, they influence us, as we also like to be like them. If we keep the company of bad people, we are influenced by their bad thoughts, and we go astray along with them. So we need a Master to build that atmosphere of devotion around us in order to follow that Path and to go within. We do not achieve anything in this world without a teacher or a guide, so how can we achieve God-realization without an inner teacher or guide?

Q. 199. Master, speaking about going back, is it absolutely necessary to go back with the Master? Can one reach up to the various planes by his own efforts?

A. We always need a teacher. We are so much under the sway of mind, of the senses, that unless there is somebody to shake us from the roots, to take us back to Him, we can never reach Him. We are in a deep, deep sleep. We are all dead. We need somebody to put life in us. We need somebody to give us that eye with which we can see inside, we need somebody to give us that ear through which we have to hear, somebody to give us that living water by which we have to come

back to life again, from death. Christ also referred to that "living water", to the "single" or inner eye, to the inner ear, when he said, "Ye have ears to hear but ye hear not", for it is the inner ear with which we hear inside. He also raised the dead to life, which means that he awakened the spiritually dead, while in the human body. He was the spiritual teacher of his time. Call him anything, but we definitely need a teacher to know that science of spirituality. And inside it is impossible to travel at all on the right Path without a teacher.

Q. Why do you say it is impossible?

A. Because there are so many more and greater temptations and obstacles in our way inside. Even in this world we always lean on somebody to help us, to give us advice, when we get confused, lost, frustrated and we weep. And inside it is much more difficult. It is impossible to go without somebody to guide us, somebody to lead us back to our Home. If from the States you want to go to India, you do not, just by your own intelligence, reach India. You see a travel agent. You collect all sorts of information. You read books on the subject. You go to somebody who has been to India to get all the information you can and all the help you can before you start on your journey. Then you have to purchase your tickets and have to rely on a conveyance to get there. Just by your own efforts you will never get there. How many helping hands you get on the way to reach that place! So when we want to return to our Home, how much more help we need to go back to Him!

Q. Well, if there is help here, is there not help there also? Would

there not be help at each plane? We find people here in the world willing to help?

A. If there is help here, there will always be help there, provided we have definite help here.

Q. If a yogi, by his own efforts, were to reach the first plane, would he not find adequate help there to reach the next plane?

A. No, the yogi must have been taught by somebody how to reach the first plane. He is not a born yogi.

Q. Well, the world is full of teachers. They say in India there are thousands of teachers that are teaching some——?

A. Get hold of anyone you feel like, but in any way you need a teacher. I am not telling you which teacher you should choose, but my answer is that you need a teacher.

Q. In other words one should adopt one teacher and hold to that teacher until he reaches some realization?

A. Well, we have to make a search for a teacher, and when we get hold of a teacher, then we have to hold onto him. Then we should not leave him.

Q. 200. Is it possible to get hold of a wrong teacher?

A. That is possible too, why not?

Q. Could one spend his whole lifetime working and holding onto the wrong teacher?

A. I generally advise the seekers that even if they spend their whole life in seeking, it is not time lost, but it is time gained. We should never plunge blindly into anything. We must satisfy our intellect, so that this intellect may not become a barrier in our way. We must satisfy it before we can progress on

the Path. So if to satisfy our intellect about a teacher, about a path, we spend the whole life, I assure you it is not time lost, but it is time gained. We are just building a strong foundation. We are digging deep for a building. The deeper the foundation the bigger the construction you can put up. We must build on a rock, make a thorough research into what we are going to do, and not just plunge blindly without investigating or satisfying ourselves that this is the right path for us. And once we have satisfied our intellect, then we should not let our intellect interfere with our progress. We should set aside the intellect. What we need then is practice and faith. Practice and faith, not intellect, will take you to your destination.

Q. 201. Master, can we be deceived inside?

A. Yes, we can be more easily deceived inside than outside. But a satsangi knows how to distinguish the true from the false. A disciple of a true Master can never be deceived.

Q. 202. Is the teacher within?

A. The teacher is always within, but unless you meet him outside you can never find him within. How to find that teacher who is within you, for that you also need a teacher. But the real teacher, of course, is within. Our real Master is within. He is always there to guide us. But to reach that teacher within, we need a teacher outside.

Q. Why?

A. Just to reach that teacher who is within us.

Q. Is it possible without a teacher on the outside?

A. No. It is neither practical nor possible.

Q. Is it possible to be unaware of that? That there may be a guide, a teacher on the outside, but I am unaware of it?

A. We have to search for the teacher.

Q. But if I realize the teacher within?

A. There is nothing like it, if one can; but it may be self-deception.

Q. How will one know that it is a self-deception?

A. For that also you need a teacher to tell you.

Q. I need a teacher to tell me that that is self-deception?

A. That is right. Otherwise you can be misled, you can be deceived. Your mind may be playing tricks with you.

Q. But the mind may not have anything to do with it?

A. It may not, but also it may have. In order to differentiate whether the mind has anything to do with it or not, we need a guide.

Q. How does one differentiate?

A. That is why I say we need a guide, to know that.

Q. Well, in our lives there are many teachers, you know, as we see them grow great and noble?

A. That is right. That is right in every sphere of life.

Q. And they are our gurus as we go along, so they are adequate in their way?

A. That is right. In their own line.

Q. To have one who is alive, is better, of course?

A. For our spiritual development, we have to find a living spiritual teacher. In order to become a doctor, we need a teacher who is a doctor. In order to get some other knowledge, you need a teacher in that line. In order to gain spiritual development within ourselves, we need a living spiritual teacher.

Q. 203. Is there only one spiritual teacher for all?

A. There may be many. Spiritual teachers are not confined to any particular caste or religion or to any particular country or state. They can be anywhere and there can be any number.

Q. You say there are many teachers; there may be many teachers, then how can an individual know when he has the right teacher?

A. It is extremely difficult, to tell you frankly, because we try to judge them on an intellectual level, and depend on that to guide us rightly. But still there are certain ways. We have got to see them in order to satisfy our intellect as to whether one is a right teacher or a wrong teacher, according to our limited intellect. There are signs for that. But even with all that we can be misled. Even with all our intellectual findings, we can be misled and follow the wrong teacher also. It is the grace of the Lord that puts us in touch with the right teacher. Actually, without the grace of the Lord, we can never meet the right teacher. There are signs which we have to see; but they are seen only with our intellect, so to say, and our intellect can deceive us.

Q. Do these signs differ and vary with each individual?

A. Not much. I do not think you have read our

books, for certain things are described in them. But that is also written with intellect, to satisfy the intellect, and intellect can deceive us even there. In fact, we can depend only upon the grace of the Lord.

Q. 204. My husband says that we should not go to the Master, as we have got Master in ourselves, and we should just work for ourselves, and that we do not need any Initiation?

A. Sister, if one can work for oneself, definitely one does not need a teacher. It is very difficult to work for oneself. More or less, one works for the mind—self-deception, I would say. We definitely need a Master outside to find our own Master inside. We need a Master to reach that stage where we need no Master. But without a living Master, we can never get there.

Q. 205. In this country, I do not know if it is the same in India, some people say that they have Initiation inside and do not need any outer Master. What can you say to them?

A. Sister, you have seen India, you have seen America. You can compare it better now that you have seen both. I have seen only one, and I am trying to see the other now. We definitely need Initiation by a Master to put us on the path. Initiation is not a ritual; it is a guiding factor in our life. The Master is always there. He does not just forget about us after Initiation. He is always there to guide us and lead us. So, whether we need him or not, he is always there to lead us and help us. Ultimately the Initiation and the Master and the Audible Life Stream and Devotion and the Lord and the Soul become one. These are just means to go back and merge into Him.

Q. 206. Why is a Master more than a priest or a preacher? Why is he more valuable to one seeking spiritual salvation?

A. In the beginning we should just take him as a preacher or a teacher or a guide. And when we go in, we will realize what he does for us. We automatically see what he is. In the beginning we are just to take him as a guide, as a friend, as a leader, somebody to put us on the Path. Then we, ourselves, will realize why we need him more and more. In every line in this world we need a teacher, and we always give them due respect and are grateful to them for being so helpful to us. All that we are, is due to our teachers. In the same way, we need a Master, we need a guide, to put us on this spiritual Path, to lead and guide us on that Path. And when we realize what that Path is, we get some idea of the duties and responsibilities of the Master, and then we automatically see what he is doing for us. There is nothing that we have to force ourselves to admit or take to certain things. All this comes from within, and whenever it comes, it comes from within. The realization is within.

Q. The way I have interpreted that question of this gentleman here is, the Master is the thing itself, the Light itself; and the preacher is the one that talks about the Light, only talks about it or tries to describe it?

A. The Master does not only describe it to us, he actually leads us inside, and ultimately we merge back into him and he merges back into the Lord. We all become one. Everybody is a wave of that ocean. A wave comes from the ocean and merges back into the ocean along with whatever has been consigned to it.

Q. 207. If we are the temple of the spirit, we are also one with that light that has never had a beginning and never will have an end?

A. That is right.

Q. Why do we need the advice and counsel of a human if we are one with that light?

A. Because now we are not one with it. We need the counsel because we again want to be one with that light.

Q. We never cease to be and we never will cease to exist. There is no beginning and no end?

A. That is right. Actually do you see that light? Do you know that you are part of it now?

Q. If we are the temple of the spirit, we are automatically one with that light.

A. That is what we think intellectually but, practically, we want to be one with it.

Q. But we are one with it? We are one with it and we do not know?

A. I and the Father are one. I can say I am God. But I am a prisoner here, and I will be God when I get released from all these prisons and go back and merge into Him. That is God-realization.

Q. I do not feel that I am a prisoner. I feel that I am a part of that light, serving His purpose.

A. We are all part of that light.

Q. If it takes one hundred incarnations, I am serving the purpose of that light, so why worry when it ends?

A. Oh, no. We are all serving the purpose of this

creation. Without serving the purpose, the creation cannot exist.

Q. I realize that, but if we are automatically the temple of the spirit, we are automatically that light, and there should be no contemplation of when we leave, as we are here to serve that light?

A. We are part of that light. We are part of that Lord and that Power, that Lord God, whatever you may call it. But now we are separated from Him, or caged in this body. We can say theoretically we are God, but there is a difference now, as long as we are a prisoner here. When we develop our consciousness to that stage that we again see that light and merge into that light, then actually we can say we *are* that Light, we are God.

Q. But I do not feel that I am a prisoner. I feel that I am serving that Light with every breath that I take.

A. How do you know that you are serving that Light? You see, we are under the sway of the mind and the senses.

Q. I am that Light that existed millions of years ago and will never end?

A. It will not end. From this body you will go to another body, and then to another and so on.

Q. We are all one with that Light?

A. The whole creation is one with the Lord.

Q. And we mix it up with our physical mind and wonder what to do, but we do not have to do if we know ourselves it is automatic to us?

A. No, no. The same light is in the animals; the

same light is in insects; but we would not like to be that.

Q. But each person is his own interpreter of that light. He does not have to seek outside counsel, as the light tells him what to do?

A. But the pity is it does not tell us what to do.

Q. It does tell us?

A. We have that light within us, but unless we see that light within, unless we merge into that light, as Christ said, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light", we are not aware of it.

Q. But nobody can tell the other person?

A. You have to open that eye in order to see that light. The light, of course, is there and it does not come from anywhere outside; but we have to develop that consciousness, to open that eye which sees that light. Without the actual experience, this is just a way of explaining that I and the Father are one. Naturally we are one, but unless we remove all these stumbling blocks, all these walls from our way, we cannot become one with Him. Intellectually it is all right to say we are one. We can all think like that, but practically, it makes all the difference between us and the Lord. We are all rays from the same Light and we have come from that Light and we have got to go back to merge back into that same Light. That is what we are all striving for.

Q. Master, if we were able to use that Light, as we should, the whole time, every moment,we would not need to be here, would we?

A. No. We would be *in* that Light.

Q. We could not be in this world then, could we?

A. We would merge back into Him. Who would like to remain away from Him? A drop of water would not like to remain merged in the dust and dirt, nor does it enjoy the separation from the cloud or the ocean from which it came.

Q. We are, then, masters of our life and death.

A. Yes, and that is the purpose of meditation. Now the mind is controlling us. We are striving to control the senses and the mind, for then only can we become a conscious part of that light.

Q. 208. Master, you said that once the chela has attuned himself to the Sound Current, the Sound Current will draw him up to the Source from which he has come. Well, if the Sound Current will draw him up to the Source, what is the purpose of the Master?

A. The purpose of the Master is to connect him to the Sound Current and to be with him all through, so that he may not fall into the temptations, he may not be driven away from the real Path. There is no difference between the Master and the Sound Current inside. The Sound Current *is* your Master. Every human being needs a Master who is in the human form, to connect him with the Master, the Sound Current inside. We need someone in the human form who has made that contact and is himself merged in the Sound Current, and that someone is the living Master.

Q. 209. Master, in the introduction to the English version of the *Sar Bachan* it mentioned that Swami Ji meditated for seventeen years in a dark back room before he brought out the teachings of Radha Soami, which implied that he had no early teacher in that life. I

was eager to know if this indicates that he was one of those Masters you spoke of, in a class of those who came directly from God?

A. Sister, generally the disciples of every Saint refuse to believe that their own Master ever had a Master. This is out of respect to their own Master. They think that their own Master was so great that he never needed a teacher. Actually, Swami Ji had a teacher. I do not want to enter into controversy about history or other points, but Swami Ji definitely had a teacher who put him on the Path, who gave him all that he wanted to give him, internally and externally, and Swami Ji continued the practice before he taught, before he put people on the Path. Similarly, Guru Nanak had a teacher, Kabir had a teacher, but no disciples of any Master will believe that their Master needed a teacher. In our fondness, we think that probably our Master will not be considered great if we admit that he had a teacher. That is exactly cutting at the root of the very teachings of those Masters, to say that they never had a Master. Every teacher needs a Master. Before he becomes a teacher he is a disciple. If the disciple then comes to that stage he also can become a Master. I do not agree that Swami Ji never had a teacher. Swami Ji had a teacher, whether they admit it or not. But, I do not wish to enter into controversy with anybody.

Q. 210. Did Jesus have a Master?

A. I am not a student of history. Historians probably have to prove who was the Master of Jesus. Perhaps John the Baptist has said that he baptized Jesus. I do not know who was the teacher or Master of Christ, but he must have had a teacher. We do not degrade a Master to whom we give sole respect by

accepting the fact that he had a teacher. We rather praise such Masters by doing so, because they prove the knowledge, the wisdom, the Path, that everybody needs a teacher, and they are the first to give an example to the public that we need a teacher. It is for the historians to say who was Christ's teacher; but definitely not without a teacher did he get all the beautiful teachings that he tried to give us. Saints may have a formal teacher, just to prove to us that a teacher is necessary, but every Master has had a teacher. As I explained yesterday, if the candle is ready, it needs only a match to light it. For the other, we have to bring the wick and the wax, and mould it, make a candle, and then light it. So, all those guides of souls, who come into this world to teach us, they are all ready. They just need a lighting from another candle, another Master, to become a full Master. But all the same, they need a teacher, and they have a teacher. This is the law of the Lord.

Q. 211. I do not mean any disrespect, but I am just wondering concerning our Western Mystics, such as St. Francis, St. John of the Cross, illuminated souls, according to stories. I cannot vouch for it that they were God-realized, and they did not have Christ next to them, as he died about one thousand years earlier. I am just wondering. I mean, St. Francis of Assissi was a realized soul and a great Saint, and the same with St. John of the Cross. Now, you have pointed out that they needed a living Guru, but they worshiped the past in Jesus Christ of one thousand years before. How did they attain illumination?

A. In every age there has always been a Master, and in every age there will be a Master. Masters are not confined to any particular country or any particular time or any particular age. There always has been a Master in the world.

Q. I mean that these Saints never mentioned another name but that of Christ?

A. The article that was just read is the report of some research by a writer, explaining the necessity of a Master. It does not mean that he has named all the Saints of the world. He has just picked up a few Saints and just explained whatever he wants to tell you. All those Saints corroborate what he wants to tell you. He has not made a history of all the Saints in this article.

Q. Would St. Francis have shown a devotion to his own particular Master by mentioning his name?

A. He must have shown it. I do not know the history of St. Francis. I cannot comment on this unless I have read the history of St. Francis and know his works. I have respect for all Masters in any way.

Q. 212. I do not happen to be a satsangi, but I was just wondering that from the discourse that was given tonight in reference to the Guru—I think that means teacher—that one cannot see God unless one sees through, or is led by the Guru. Now, in Guru, does that refer only—well, Christ was mentioned, but I am referring to the Eastern, the Indian, as being the Guru today that we might recognize. I refer to, let us say, America, where we may not be so familiar with the methods, or the thinking of the Indian or the Eastern culture, and therefore we might not find it so familiar to comprehend what is said, or to cope with it. So if one feels this way and hears that only through a Guru can one see God, it is disheartening if one cannot recognize the Guru, say, within one's own culture?

A. Well, sister, as far as The Bible is concerned, and I believe that every Christian reads The Bible, it is very clear that we need a Master in order to go back to the Lord. Without the Master's help we cannot go back to the Lord. Christ said, "He that hath

seen me hath seen the Father", and "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me". Christ was the Master in his time. As far as that principle, that philosophy is concerned, it is very clearly laid down, whether it is the West or whether it is the East. It is for us to believe in it or not to believe in it; to accept it or to reject it. But when we are very sincere and we understand the philosophy and want to follow it, then nature also helps to put us on that Path. But we must be sincere about it, understand it and want to do it. When that true longing is within us, the onus is on the Lord to put us on the Path and, through His grace, we meet a living Master who guides us back to Him.

Q. I mean the Guru, does that have to be a physical manifestation?

A. That is what we believe in. We believe in a living Master.

Q. 213. Maharaj Ji, can the Master sometimes grant the disciple a "going within" for a moment, for a moment of encouragement, before the disciple has reached the stage of seeing him inside?

A. Yes, sister, it happens. Sometimes even before Initiation it happens. We have some visions just to give us faith, or to keep us straight on the Path. And even sometimes after Initiation, before we have reached the stage of going in at will, we have visions, we have glimpses here and there, just to keep us on the Path. But through spiritual practice we have to work our way up and then realize all those things. It does happen.

Q. 214. Do those who hanker after happiness and peace, require a Guru equally, the same as in mystical work?

A. As I said in one of my lectures here, everybody wants happiness. There is hardly anybody who does not want peace. But the question is whether the place where we are trying to search for peace, is the place where peace can be found. If we want peace politically, economically, socially, we will never achieve it. History does not encourage us. We will always be at war with each other. So many social reformers have come into this word, so many statesmen and world politicians have been here, but we are not better humans nor are we enjoying more peace. We are always fighting against each other. I think our approach is wrong.

If we try to find peace spiritually, on the spiritual platform, we will get peace within ourselves and we will radiate peace everywhere we go. If we are to find peace, we have to seek peace within our body. Unless you seek peace within yourself, you will never find peace outside. The nearer the humans will be towards the Lord, the closer all the human beings will be to each other. The more we forget Him, the more we are deviating from each other, the more we are hating each other. So, if we really want peace, let us go back to the same goal, the same source or origin, the same destination. The closer we come to Him, the closer we come to each other. That is why Christ said, "Love one another". And we can only love one another when we love the Lord, when we love our own destination, when we stand on the spiritual platform. But in our search for peace we are ignoring the spiritual platform.

Even our politicians want to use the spiritual platform, not from a spiritual point of view but from a political point of view. They are interested only

in power and votes, and not in you and me. They do not mind killing thousands and hundreds of thousands in order to gain power. Not that they are spiritual, but that they want to use the name of religion for their own selfish ends and means. But who listens to you and me ?

We can find peace only within ourselves. Unless we seek that peace within ourselves, we can never be happy even in this world. If sometimes you are in agony, you are at war with yourself, you are unhappy, even if you live in a palace, you may have a thousand dishes before you, you may have many happy people around you, but you are not happy; nothing appeals to you. But when you are happy within yourself, then you find love and joy even from anything you pick up, every step you take, you just dance with happiness.

I often give an example: A child goes to the World's Fair, holding onto his father's hand. Everything in the fair appeals to the child. Somewhere children are playing, somewhere there are trained porpoise and whales performing, music, electric lights and so many other things to enjoy that the child probably thinks that he is getting happiness out of all that he sees and hears in the fair. But the moment he loses hold of his father's hand and is lost in separation from the father, then he begins to weep. The same things are still going on in the fair, but nothing appeals to him. Then he realizes that he could get peace and joy from this fair only as long as he was holding the hand of his father. Similarly, we have only one Father, as is mentioned in the Bible, "For one is your Father". As long as we remain in His Will, we are holding His hand, we love Him, we are

devoted to Him, we are in communion with Him, or we are trying to seek Him or are on our way to Him, we will be happy and we will also find peace while in this world. The moment we forget Him, or lose hold of His hand, this whole world will be nothing but an agony.

Any number of politicians or social reformers may come into this world, but they will never be able to create peace in this world at all, merely on political and social levels. But if peace is attained on a spiritual level, then everything else is included, and that peace alone is permanent.

Q. 215. I read in one of the books that unless one has actually met the Master personally, it is impossible to go inside and reach Sach Khand. Is it a fact that one must actually meet the Master in person, first?

A. Unless we have a living Master, that is what it means.

Q. I understood from the book that unless one had been initiated by the Master in person—is that a fact?

A. That may not have been understood correctly, for when the Master initiates us through somebody, he is responsible, for it is actually he who is initiating us. The one conducting the Initiation is not responsible, as he is just an instrument on the way. So, by this means the applicant has actually met the Master. According to the philosophy of Sant Mat, we have got to contact or meet a living Master. If we can come physically in his presence, that is very good; if we cannot do so, it is for him to connect us through some other channel. That is equally good.

Q. How about the contemplation of the Master's form, the Dhyan part of it?

A. While doing Simran (repeating the five Holy Names), we should contemplate on the form of the Master, keeping his form here, at the eye center. But if we have not seen the Master in person, we can just keep our attention here and do the Simran, and even then the Master will appear inside. We are just to hold our attention here, at the eye center, and do the Simran. The same Master will appear. If you have met him, have seen him, you can contemplate on his form; but you should never contemplate on any picture or photo. That is not advisable.

When the Master initiates, whether he does it personally or by proxy, he is personally present to initiate the soul. Space and distance make no difference as far as the Master is concerned, but definitely there are certain advantages that at least a disciple feels in the personal presence of the Master, which otherwise, perhaps, he does not feel. But in spiritual practice, the advantages will be the same, whether you have met the Master face-to-face or not; whether you are initiated by him personally or through someone designated by him to give the verbal instructions. It is the direct Initiation as far as you are concerned. You will get the same result in your meditation that you would get otherwise. A disciple does always feel much better if he can come into the presence of the Master or have his own contact with the Master. However, from the meditation or spiritual achievement *point of view*, it makes no difference at all.

Q. 216. Master, to contact the Master, when we have to live and work like we do, who belong to the working class, there is no possibility of our going abroad and living in devotion with the Master?

A. Brother, when you are convinced of the necessity of a Master, you will meet a Master.

Q. 217. Maharaj Ji, on the path inward, here in the West, we have so little opportunity for Darshan (beholding or seeing the Master). What is our answer there?

A. Well, brother, real Darshan is inside. Everyone has to work for that. The outside Darshan is good, but then we have to take a practical view. So in the absence of all that, we can hold small group meetings and read literature, and try to devote more time to Bhajan and Simran.

Group meetings are very useful, provided there are no bickerings, no petty jealousies, and provided they bring us nearer to each other. We do not hold meetings to give vent to our differences, or to show our superiority, or to boss over others. That is not the object of the meetings; but is rather contrary to the very purpose of the meetings. The object of the meetings is to inculcate humility in us and to bring us together, and to encourage each other on the Path. Our example should be such that if anybody is in some doubt, it will help him to come back on the Path again. That is the object, just to create that atmosphere. Because mere mechanical meditation, say giving time for two and one-half hours every day and then forgetting about Sant Mat, is not the right answer. We have to *live* in Sant Mat, so that we are in it the whole day. And that can be done only if we carry Sant Mat in our own atmosphere around us. If we just leave the atmosphere in the house, again try to pick it up the next morning, in that way we are satsangis for only two hours or so, and not the whole day. We have to be satsangis for the

whole day. We have to build that atmosphere around us, so that whoever comes in that, automatically is influenced and affected by it. We have to do the same thing there, in India, as well as here in America. There is no difference. For a Master and a disciple, this space or distance does not count at all.

Q. 218. After having partaken of the Darshan by gazing upon the countenance of the Master in person, can one get approximately the same results after he is gone, by gazing upon his picture or photo?

A. I will just explain to you what the meaning of Darshan is. Why do we look at our beloved? We love him. We do not want to take our gaze away from him, because we are in love with him. We always want to see and see and see him. If we try to analyze "why", perhaps we have no explanation for it. But we look at him, have his Darshan, just to have association, mental association, or because it is something we just cannot help. It comes from within ourselves.

The purpose of having the Master's Darshan is that when we sit in meditation, we should try to be able to contemplate on his form, when we have seen it. We should never try to contemplate on a photo. Photos are only for refreshing our memories. We have photos in our houses of our friends and relatives. We never contemplate on them. When we are moving about and glancing at them, they are just to remind us of that friend or that relative, of our affection for them, of the good deeds that they have done and of our obligations towards them. That is the purpose of our keeping photos in our houses. We do not worship these photos. They just remind us of those individuals and our affection for them. So we generally

keep a photo of our Master in our house so that it may keep us reminded of him in the sense that we remain reminded of his teachings, of the principles of Sant Mat which he has taught us to follow. These teachings, as given by him, should always remain fresh in our mind. That is the purpose of the photo.

Q. Is there an advantage in looking at the photo?

A. No. There is absolutely no advantage at all. When I was still a child, the Great Master for a very long time did not permit himself to be photographed, lest people start worshiping his photo, as many people do of the Saints who have departed, and start meditating on the pictures, which is against the principles of Sant Mat. The first photo of the Great Master was taken for the public when Dr. Brock wrote from America persistently, "I want to see what my Master looks like", outside. So the Great Master's first picture was taken just to be sent to America. From there, slowly and slowly, a picture was given to a few others, restricted to only a few people in India. I still remember the occasion. It was a great problem for people to get a copy of that picture because in those days photography was not so common that everybody could bring a camera for a snap. But later, when Mahattas became satsangis, and other professional photographers, too, came in, the Master could not conceal himself any longer. Wherever he went, everybody began taking his photograph. But he always insisted that these pictures or photos should never be used for meditating purposes. We should never contemplate on the photo.

Q. 219. Has the Master the power to help the disciple open the

inner eye, while the disciple is meditating, or is it just that we have to be purified so much until it automatically opens of its own accord and then the Master helps us to open it?

A. Brother, it takes both. We have to put in the effort, and the grace of the Master is always there. My Master used to tell us that if a disciple goes one step forward, the Master comes ten steps to receive him. If we go ten steps, he comes a hundred steps to receive us. If we are sincere and honest in our devotion, in our efforts, he never withholds his grace. It is always there.

Q. 220. Can a chela, a disciple, reach Sahansdal Kanwal without Initiation?

A. Yes. I do not say up to Sahansdal Kanwal, but with our efforts, our personal efforts without a guide, we can reach up to a certain stage, but then there is a block. We cannot go ahead. We can see a light, we can hear the Sound to a degree, but by our own efforts or by just following the instructions given in books, we will be stuck there and cannot go ahead.

Q. How far can one go without Initiation?

A. That again depends upon the karmas of the individual. Whatever little progress we do make without a Master is due to many factors of our past births. This is very difficult to describe. We do make some, but very limited progress.

Q. Then we do not need the Sound Current to reach Sahansdal Kanwal, because you said yesterday that one could reach Sahansdal Kanwal...?

A. No, I said that you could make progress to some extent with your own efforts; but you do not make

much progress inside by your own efforts. You need a Master. The Master is nothing but the Sound, and Sound is nothing but the Master. Our real Master is Sound, the Word, the Bani, the Shabd, the Nam—give it any name. The Master just takes the form from that Sound, and merges back into the Sound.

Q. Now you say we cannot reach Sahansdal Kanwal without Initiation?

A. Sahansdal Kanwal is not as small as this universe. It is a big region. You may reach the rim of the lower portion with your own efforts, yet you may not reach Sahansdal Kanwal itself. Sometimes you may see a reflection of what is there and you think that you have seen the whole thing. Actually, it is just a reflection, as you see that of the sun in the water. Definitely, with your own efforts, you can make some progress up to a certain extent; but that, too, only with exceedingly great effort. Beyond that, you can make no further spiritual progress by yourself. And then, by your own efforts, you have no way of knowing whether you are going in the right direction or in the wrong direction. You have got to have somebody to guide you.

Q. 221. What does it mean when Christ said, "No man can serve two masters"?

A. That is right. Your devotion to your Master should be one-pointed. "A rolling stone gathers no moss". If you run from or shift from Master to Master, from place to place, you will get nowhere. We have got to build definite faith and devotion in our guide who is to lead us. Unless we develop that faith, our mind will not let us practise, as we will have

so many doubts coming in our mind, and then we will make no progress. So what Christ meant was that we must have implicit faith in our Master. The other master is our mind and senses. It is not possible to be a slave of the senses and serve the Lord simultaneously, for the one is the exact opposite of the other, and we cannot go in two directions at the same time. Either we are bound down by the mind and senses, or we serve the Master by doing the spiritual practice and thus go back up and merge into the Lord. Christ also said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon", meaning that it is impossible to go up and merge back into Him as long as we have any attachments down here, whether it is possessions, wealth, family, friends—anything that keeps our attention away from Him is mammon. That must not be our Master if we want to make any progress at all. Only our spiritual Master can help us reach our Goal.

Q. 222. When one has professed to be a Christian and has no cause to doubt, the question arises that if one has got to be a satsangi, which Master would be correct, and how could one serve both?

A. But are you sure Christ is your Master just by your becoming a Christian? That is the main thing. If Christ is your Master, or when you become a Christian he becomes your Master, then you do not need a Master. If it is just a deception in your mind that he is your Master, and actually he is not, then you need one.

Sister, the real teaching of Christ is something quite different from just embracing Christianity. According to the teachings of Christ, we have to find a living Master, and the only way in which we can really follow his teachings is to be in the fold of a

living Master. Christ initiated certain people and took them to his abode. He indicated that as long as "I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." He said very beautifully to the effect that, 'Now I am with you, but after a little while I shall leave you and then again I shall be with you. Now you have so many doubts, but when I shall be with you after a little while, you shall have no doubts'. These are all mystic things. When Christ said that he was going to leave them, he meant only as far as the physical form was concerned. And that was said to certain disciples of his, and not to you and me today. When he said to his disciples, those whom he had initiated in his lifetime, "A little while and ye shall see me" he meant that he had not only initiated them in the physical form, for after he had left the physical form he should be with them in his Radiant Form inside, permanently. Now you see me in the flesh and you have doubts, he said, but when you will see my radiance inside, after a little while, then you will have no questions. He explained all this beautifully to his personal disciples, pertaining to himself as their living Master. You and I cannot make use of that personality now. If we are really followers of Christ's teachings, we have got to find a living Master. We have got to know the teachings of Christ from him, and to follow those teachings, and then we can be led to Christ too, if we are interested to meet him.

Somehow we are just involved in personalities and do not give any attention to nor do we try to understand the real *teachings* of the personalities. If we understand the real teachings of Christ, the personality, we will know what he wants us to follow. He did his work and he left certain teachings for us to

follow, but we are not paying any attention to his teachings. We are still trying to think about him, his personality. His disciples living in his time, could benefit by his physical presence; but you and I cannot make use of his physical presence. We can only make use of his teachings, and in order to follow his teachings, we must have a living Master. Then only can we be true Christians and then only are we following his teachings. From what little I have read in the Bible, this is very clear.

Christ also said that we have got to merge back into the Lord, "I and the Father are one", "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." He indicated that our soul is the essence of the Lord. Unless our soul merges back into the Lord, it will not get release from birth and death. He also explained that the Lord is not anywhere outside, but that He is within the human body, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Also, "Ye are the temple of the living God". The living God is within you, so you have to seek the Lord within your body. You have to make a search in this manner, not outside. Then he told us, "In my Father's house are many mansions". We have to pass through many stages before we can reach our destination. Then he hinted that we have to knock at the door of our house, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you; seek and ye shall find". You always knock at a door from outside, and the door is opened from inside. We are outside, the door is inside, here at the eye center. We have to withdraw the consciousness up to this door of our house and "knock" here. The method of "knocking" is to concentrate here, hold our attention here, and the door will be opened from inside.

There we seek, and we shall find the Path leading to our destination. Being on that Path, we will find the Lord, whom we are seeking in the body. These are all mystical terms which we have to understand.

We also find in The Bible that Christ said, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light". When we knock at that door, the single or third eye, that eye is opened and we see that light. Until we merge into that light, we cannot travel on this Path. Until then we are full of darkness and we cannot know or see our destination. Christ also talked about the Word or Logos when he said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the spirit". By this he is referring to the Holy Ghost, that Audible Life Stream, the Holy Spirit, the Sound Current that is within everyone of us, and we can be in touch with that only after we knock and open this door, the single eye or third eye.

Then Christ indicates that the dead will rise, the deaf will hear and the blind will see, and the lame will walk, when they see that light, when they hear that wind or Sound within. We are all blind and deaf as well as spiritually dead and lame, but when that inner eye is open, we shall really see, hear and be alive and walk straight on the Path leading back to the Lord. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." Before we come to that realization, we have eyes and see not; and we have ears and hear not. We do not see the Lord. What is the definition of a blind man? One who cannot see something that is in his presence. We all know that the Lord is within everyone of us, He is

within every sphere, but we do not see Him—neither inside nor outside. So we are blind people. When that inner eye is open and that inner ear is open, we see that light and we hear the Sound, that silent music, and the dead will rise. We are all dead. As far as the world is concerned we are living, but as far as the Lord is concerned, we are dead, we have forgotten Him. We have given ourselves wholly to this world, so we are dead as far as He is concerned. But with that "living water" which He gives us inside, we become alive again, are raised from the dead. Then we are dead as far as the world is concerned, and we are living as far as the Lord is concerned.

These are all mystic terms in The Bible which we have to understand. Just by becoming Christians, you do not become His disciples. You need somebody to explain all these mystic terms. The Bible is not just straight reading like a novel. In order to know the teachings, you have to dig deep, here and there. So many things have been suppressed, so many things have been misinterpreted, so many things have been forgotten and lost. We have to link, take out from here and there, and knit the parts into a whole garment; then we can know the real teachings. You do not become His followers merely by rituals and dogmas, running to the churches and being baptized. You have to do much more to become His real followers, to become real Christians. Everybody has to become a real Christian before he can go back to Him. Everybody is stranded here. We are all trying to be real Christians. You call His teachings Christianity, and others will call His teachings Sant Mat, Science of the Soul; but a true Christian is a traveler on the same Path. They are all His teachings.

No saints suggest any particular way of meditation. There is only one way of meditation. The Lord is one, He is within everyone of us, and we have to seek Him within. The Path leading to Him cannot be different for you, different for me or any different for another person. The Path must also be the same. Those who follow the Path are the real Christians, whether they are Hindus or Sikhs or Christians or Americans or Indians. Whoever follows the Path is the real disciple of Christ, the real disciple of Nanak, the real disciple of the Great Master, the real disciple of Kabir and all true saints. These are only different names. Every saint comes and teaches us the same principle, gives us the same teachings of spirituality. No saint brings his own teachings to tell us. "The Father in me doeth all things." They just come to fish out the marked souls, to collect the sheep assigned to them by the Lord and take them back to the Lord, to do their allotted task. Their mission in life is to put these souls on the Path, and those who come on the Path become their real followers.

It is just for our mental satisfaction that we say, "I have become a Christian" or "I have become a Sikh". These are just political religions, just ways of living in the world. You are what you are, and it hardly makes any difference what dress you wear, what clothes you wear, whether you dress Indian style, American style or African style, your body is the same. You cannot change; these are just coverings, which you call Christianity or this faith or that. As long as you are doing the real practice of meditation, searching within, these coverings make absolutely no difference. In these days we are just being lost in these rituals and ceremonies, forgetting the real

teachings of the saints, fighting each other—Christianity against Hinduism, Hinduism against Sikhism and vice versa—and taking pleasure in fighting. We think that by so doing we are followers of the saints, but do not question whether they own us or not. At that stage we are just slaves of the mind and senses; nothing else, and are only deceiving ourselves in thinking otherwise.

Q. 223. Will there be a living Master in the United States some day?

A. The Lord knows best. Masters are not confined to any caste or creed, or any country or nation. The Lord can send them anywhere, any time. That is entirely up to Him. When He finds the need for doing so or He finds the ground prepared, He may send a Master.

Q. 224. I think I heard on one of your tapes that you would not initiate someone who was congenitally blind. Does this have anything to do with the fact that they have not seen the light?

A. No, the physical eyes have no connection with the light that we see inside. And even if you do not have these eyes and you concentrate here, you will see the light. That is not a physical light and you do not see that light with the physical eyes. As Christ said, "If thine eye be single." There is no other physical eye in the body except these two eyes. You ask any doctor. That single eye is something mystic inside, which we have to open in order to see that light. These physical eyes are not at all required to see that light.

Q. Then it is something pertaining to a karmic situation?

A. That is right. Those who are born blind generally have an extremely heavy load of karma.

Q. 225. .....The kingdom of God is within you..?

A. The kingdom of God is within you, the Lord is within you, the Lord dwells within each one of us.

Q. The physical body could inherit the kingdom of heaven?

A. We do not find the Lord physically inside. It is the consciousness, the attention that we have to concentrate here, at the eye center, so that we can tread that spiritual Path. It is not anything physical inside of us.

Q. 226. If a blind man should not be initiated because of heavy karma, would God deny him help in a way by not initiating him?

A. Sister, so many people with eyes are not initiated.

Q. I see, but their past karma, I mean if they want help, who is going to help them if they want to overcome that?

A. Who helps the people who have eyes and are not initiated? But he will get an opportunity. I mean he is paying for his karma and if he performs good karmas, he will again get another opportunity as a human being.

Q. 227. Have any of the Saints, although in this line on the way back to God, the Sound Current Path, have any of them reincarnated? Have they reincarnated and been other Saints at another time?

A. You mean to say whether once a Saint, he comes back again as a Saint? Sister, all Saints are one, as I explained the first day. They are related to God as a son to a father. Christ said, "I and the Father are one. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father". The relationship of a saint with the Lord is that of a wave to an ocean. Saints are all one. They are

waves of the same ocean. There is no question of that particular personality coming again. That Power comes. It may come in anyone. That Power is the same; it is not the body. They come to preach the same philosophy, the same spirituality, and merge back into the same ocean again.

Q. 228. I read where some saints are incarnated and others are reincarnated. Now what would be the purpose of becoming reincarnated?

A. Saints do not have to come back any more unless they are sent by the Lord, and they can be sent again and again.

Q. Once they are chosen?

A. Once anybody crosses through the second stage, the question of his coming back does not arise. For example, some people work very hard to become rich, to reach the top, and some of them do become rich. There are others who just get rich without working at all. One may get an inheritance, another may get a gift, because he has pleased somebody, who gives all that he has to that person and makes him as rich as he is. So there are different types of Saints. Some are sent, some work to reach that stage, and some just get there by the grace of their Master. But as far as that stage and their qualifications are concerned, they are the same for all of them.

Q. Then how would these so-called Mahatmas, Saints, come back out of the Lord? Well, I read in Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*, making final liberation and then coming back to the astral plane for other souls of the damned?

A. I am sorry, I have not read the book and I would

not like to discuss any personality. But I can discuss the philosophy of what you say. Saints are sent by the Lord. There are three types of Saints. In one type are those who are just sent by the Lord Himself. Even they have to be initiated, so to say, technically. Even they have to find a Master, but they are absolutely ready—the candle is ready, the wick is ready, the wax is ready, only the match is required to light the candle. And there is another type of Masters, those who are in the beginning seekers and come in contact with a perfect Master and work hard to reach the state of Masters. And there is yet another type of Masters.

A rich man may give his whole wealth to a poor man and make him rich. The poor man has never worked much, but whatever he has done has pleased the rich man, so he gets a legacy, he gets a gift out of the love of the rich man, and he becomes a rich man. Likewise, the Master can make anyone a Master. It was also said of Christ that as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God. At another place in The Bible is mentioned "ye are the sons of the living God."

Q. By giving his power to that man?

A. Yes, by using his power. By merging himself into the other person. He can make anyone to be just like him.

Q. 229. Do Saints not have to come back?

A. They are sent back. There is no question of their having to come back. They are sent for a certain particular purpose, not because they come by karmas or they are being pulled down or they want to come

back to this world. They are sent by the Lord to bring certain souls back to Him.

Q. 230. I have attended a few meetings in the churches, where I hear the preaching that Jesus was the only son of God. I just feel that at that time it might have been like that. Is this the teaching of Sant Mat, that there is only one living Master at a time?

A. We have been preaching or talking all through that Saints have always been coming into the world, but they are not confined to any particular period or any particular country or any particular time. Saints are always there, have been there, and will be there, and sometimes there are contemporary Saints in the same country as well as in different countries.

Q. I have just wondered?

A. It is just our narrow outlook, narrow interpretation as we call it, that leads us to think that there can be no other living Saint or Son of God.

Q. I have just wondered if there can be only one Master at a time in the world?

A. There can be many.

Q. 231. Why are not any Masters in the Western world? I mean why are not any Masters born in the Western world, like there are in India?

A. Are you sure they are not born in the Western world?

Q. Well, I mean, we do not know about them.

A. That is what I say. Your people are not interested to know if they are in your own sphere. Because the West has always tried to investigate the history, the

material achievements, the scientific achievements—your trend has always been to this side, giving great importance to those people who have invented those things. You have just ignored your own mystics. You have never bothered to know about their history or their teachings. On the other hand, the background of the East has always been spiritual. They have ignored the scientific outlook, the historical outlook on life, or the economic or social part of life. They have always been devoted to mysticism. So their main research, main history, is directed towards spirituality, towards mystics. They know about their Mystics; they have been able to explain the teachings of their Mystics; they have been able to advertise their Mystics, so to say. Your people have been able to advertise your scientists, your historians, your other people. Mystics have not been confined to any particular country, or any particular nation. There are many Mystics, even in this country here, but they have been ignored. Nobody has heard of them, nobody bothered about them, nobody tried to know their history, nobody tried to make any research in this line. When the spiritual consciousness will awaken in this country, they too will find, naturally, their own Mystics on this side. There is no reason why they should not be here.

Q. 232. Do you think a high Master could be born in a meat-eating country?

A. It does not make any difference. You may be eating meat, but when He wants you to drop it, you drop it as a glass from your hand. You do not have to be prepared for it. I know people who have been taking meat even till the time of initiation and then

became very strict vegetarians. They leave meat-eating when they have to leave it, and they just leave it.

Q. I meant, could a soul that is to be a Master be born in such a civilization?

A. Yes, why not? He has to pay for his past karmas. He has to satisfy his unfulfilled desires, cravings which he had in his last birth. Probably he could do it best in this atmosphere, these surroundings, this environment, and after doing that, he is to make his own way on the Path. So he will be led, too, according to his destiny.

Q. 233. Do you think that the time will come when the people will know how to control the elements? Now what is your feeling about that? Do you think that we have someone like that coming?

A. Perhaps, I do not know. But Saints never come to make this world a paradise. That is not their mission at all. They come to take the marked souls back to their Home.

Saints never come to make this place a paradise. Had this been their mission, the world conditions would have been improved as so many Saints have come. Christ was here and so many great Saints were here. Still, I do not think we have improved in any way. We may boast that within this modern civilization we are far better than our ancestors but if dispassionately we think, we cannot but conclude that we are not superior human beings or better than our ancestors. We have the same crime, we have the same wars—even on a bigger scale—the same jealousies, the same throat-cutting of each other, all silly evil things we are doing. I do not think we have improved in any way. Those people, perhaps, had more

human values than we have now. So if with all the coming of the Saints we have not improved, then where is the guarantee that if more Saints will come our lot will improve? As long as the human mind is there, conditions will remain the same.

Mind always puts conflict upon conflict,—race against race, country against country, man against man. That is the nature and tendency of the mind. So we cannot ever think of making this world a paradise. We can think and know that we can rise above the problems of the world, so that these problems of the world never bother us at all. And that is exactly the mission or the purpose of the Saints. They just come to pick up their sheep from here and there, merge them into the Shabd and thus back into the Lord. That is their only object of coming into this world. They are unconcerned with the world. They are unconcerned with this modern civilization. They have to live like other people, but they are not at all affected by these things which are going on around us, because it is not in the least their business to interfere in all this. They are not the social reformers. They just come to create devotion, faith and love within us for the Lord and to take us back to the Lord. That, entirely, is their mission.

Q. 234. I have been taught that there is no difference between the Sat Guru and the Lord. Now, if this is true, why do people not believe in them?

A. People do not believe even in the Lord, so there is no question of their believing in His sons. It does not mean that if a thing is true it has to be accepted by everybody. Truth is rather rarely accepted.

Q. 235. Is it true that the physical form is the only one which makes this contact with the Master's radiant form? We must keep returning until that is accomplished?

A. You mean if we have not physically met the Master we cannot meet the Radiant Form of the Master?

Q. We keep returning, we can do better in another round?

A. No, no. Space or distance is no barrier for the Master.

Q. 236. Your Holiness, I have a question that is to me slightly embarrassing, but I am going to ask it anyway. Strictly speaking, I am not a satsangi, but I have heard that in India people make arti before a great one's picture, well, I wondered if I am permitted..?

A. Brother, to some extent it is also embarrassing for me to answer your question, because we do not believe in any ritual and ceremony at all. Where originally did arti start? That ceremony which people do outside is just a reflection of what we see inside at the first stage. We see thousands of candles lit in the first stage and our soul dances when it sees that light. So, in order to exhibit what is inside, people started a ritual or ceremony. They light candles outside and just dance around the light, or take those lights around some picture, or around some statue, or around some of their idols. It is nothing at all but ritual and ceremony. If you want to really perform the arti, you are fond of it, you will have to go "in" and see all that and do all that—not outside.

Q. 237. Is there any case of a Master being called to a country by an initiate who was deep enough in his sincerity to call the Master on his own?

A. I do not exactly follow your question.

Q. In the U.S.A. there would be people, a very selected few, with an intense desire for the Master, to set up a relationship between themselves and the Master in India. The Master would be inclined to visit them rather than they go to India?

A. I follow your question now. A Master can be anywhere, in any country. India is not the only heritage for Masters. When we are really sincere within ourselves, we want to follow the Path, but are worshiping the Lord by a wrong method, not the right sort of meditation, it is for the Lord to put us on the right Path. What we need is a real yearning and devotion for Him. Then it is His responsibility to work out how to put us on the Path. He has His own ways and means of bringing people to the Path, whatever country they belong to, or in whatever country they take their birth. He knows how to draw those souls. He knows how to collect those sheep. For Him it does not make any difference whether it is America, India or other countries. He just picks up from where He is to pick up. A Master can be born here, a Master can be born in any country. Why they are not known in the West, is because the West has never bothered about them and not that they have never been in the West. It has no tendency to know them or study them or make research in their lives. In India, which is a little spiritually minded, the Masters have become known through their devotees or writers. Any country may have Masters, must be having Masters. But people have never bothered about them; they have just forgotten or never recorded those chapters in their history, and not because they never had them.

9. (ii) MASTERS AND DISCIPLES

Q. 238. Could you tell us some of the ways that could allow us to be in the presence of the Masters or the Master?

A. Brother, just be in the presence as you are in the presence of any other human being, and that is with a relaxed mind and no nervousness, as all are struggling souls on the same Path.

Q. Master, I think, he means, what are the qualifications that we must build within ourselves in order to be in the presence of a living Master?

A. The necessity to meet him, is a sufficient qualification to go to the Master.

Q. Well, in my case—I speak about myself—I feel ardently that I should please meet that Master.

A. Most welcome, brother.

Q. I want to know how, in my meditation every day, in my recollection of the evening, all the same, I feel that I am closer and closer to the Master.

A. Brother, I assure you that when we are honest, when we are sincere seekers, we put the whole burden on the Lord to put us on the right path. You are doing your duty, and He will do His duty. You should not worry about it.

Q. 239. I have a sort of inner rebellion against belonging to a group. I feel there is a great spiritual freedom between the Master and the individual. And may not a person just have his Master without any organization? I do not know if I explained my point clearly.

A. At least, it is not clear to me, brother.

Q. The relationship between the Master and a pupil is really an individual one. Is it really necessary to belong to a group, or a?

A. No. The relationship of a Master with a disciple is just a personal relationship of the individual. It does not come through society; it does not come through groups; it does not come through organizations. It is a personal contact of a disciple with a Master, and nobody comes in the way at all.

Q. 240. Master, what happens to the initiates of a Master if he passes on before the initiates do? We won't have a living Master?

A. Brother, as far as the disciple is concerned his Master is always living. Our Master's responsibility is not only to initiate us but to take us back to the Lord Himself. He is there with us. The physical body is not the Master. Something else is the Master. As you have read in the Bible, Christ said to the effect that for a little while I am with you, after a little while I will leave you, and again a little while after ye shall see me. And he also said, "Now you see me in the flesh and you have no faith in me. Then you will have no doubt, for all your doubts will be resolved."

The Master never leaves us. He never leaves a disciple. He is responsible to take him back to the Lord. His guiding hand is always there. He is within us. He remains within us. We should never look to anybody else. We can get help from each other; we can get strength from each other; from his disciples or his Successor, we can get a sort of strength; we can resolve our doubts; any help; but we should look only to our Master as a Master. For us he is forever. And he will remain for us forever. He is our real Master, the body is not the Master. Our Master is within us and he remains within us. He watches us, he guides us, and he takes us back to the

Lord. So the initiate should never feel that his Master has left the physical form. The Master never leaves a disciple.

Q. After the Master just passes on, he is still able to help his disciples who became his disciples while he was here in the flesh? But beyond that he cannot help anybody else?

A. He does not. He cannot.

Q. 241. If a satsangi had a Master in the previous life, and when he leaves the body, that is, forever, for good, leaves the earth, which Master will meet him? Th present one or the one he had in his previous life?

A. All Masters are the same. They are all waves of the same ocean. The body is not the Master. Master is that Power, that Shabd, that Nam. Our real Master is that Shabd, which is here, at the eye center. Saints have taken on a human body just to explain the teachings to us. So we see them as we see any other body in this world, but actually they are made of nothing but Shabd itself. So Shabd is there to look after them. It is therefore immaterial which body comes, because the Saint does not merge into the body; but through his Master, he merges back into that Shabd. Every soul which has the seed of Initiation, ultimately merges back into that Lord through the Master. All Masters are one; there is no difference.

Q. 242. It says that in three or four incarnations we return to our Home, or find our way back Home, or want to go back Home, and walking the Path, will we meet the same Master after all those incarnations?

A. Well, brother, we must understand that all true Masters are the same. They are all waves of the same ocean. Our real Master is the Audible Life Stream,

the Logos, the Word of God which is within every one of us. He is our real Master, and whatever Master comes from that Word, his reality is just that Word, that Shabd. So you will meet many Masters from the point of view of the physical body, but actually it will be the same Master to you because all Masters are absolutely the same. The same physical form will not come again, for a seeker, for an initiate who takes another birth, but the same Master will come to him in the sense that all Masters are the same.

Q. But what about the form that we see inside, the Radiant Form? Now would we recognize that as You, for instance, or some other personality, such as Maharaj Baba Sawan Singh Ji or Jagat Singh Ji?

A. The Master who initiates you, will come within you, in his Radiant Form. He takes his form from the Shabd, from that Light, from that Sound, whatever name you give it. You will see him as you see your own Master outside, and he may bring his own Master with him; that is different, but you are only concerned with your own Master. Without your Master you are not to give any attention to any body else within yourself, if you happen to see anybody at all, because then you are likely to be deceived sometimes. So we are to give attention inside to our own Master only, and no one else, unless accompanied by our own Master.

Q. Yes, but what I meant was, supposing a person had been initiated in a previous lifetime, and he came back and was initiated again, which outwardly is probable, when he goes inside will he see the one who initiated....?

A. He will see the Master who has initiated him in his present physical body.

Q. He may also see the other one, I would think...?

A. He may, yes; but they are all one.

Q. 243. Master, I have a question that concerns many of us and we all know the answer but to hear it from you would soothe us greatly and this is the question: When I was initiated, I know that you initiated me from eleven thousand miles away, Replogle merely gave us the five Holy Names and some procedures. I would like to know, to feel that those whom you personally initiated are no higher than I am...?

A. Brother, I think I discussed that question yesterday in the evening. There is absolutely no difference whether the Master physically, personally initiates you, or initiates you through his agents. The Master is responsible. But a disciple feels nearer if he comes in contact with the Master in person. Otherwise, as far as the Master is concerned, he is near to every disciple, whether he initiates personally or he has initiated by proxy—there is absolutely no difference.

Q. 244. When we are initiated we are told that the Master is with us from then on. What I want to know, does the Master know everything that goes on within our mind or within our actions, or is his attention only drawn to in a spiritual way when we are meditating? He does not really watch all that is going on, does he?

A. I think that perhaps it would be better if he did not watch all that we do. (Laughter) Unfortunately he watches all that we do. Do you not think that God exists everywhere and He is within each one of us and He watches everyone of us, what we do?

Q. 245. Master, when we meditate upon the radiant form of the Master and if we make that contact, is that a particular individual, or is it sort of a universal consciousness that we come in contact with?

A. That particular individual comes in the form from the universal consciousness—the real form of

the Master is Shabd. The Master takes that form from the Shabd, but we see him, as we are seeing outside. Actually that is the Shabd. Christ very beautifully tried to explain in The Bible, as you have read to the effect: Now I am with you, you have no faith in me. After a little while I shall not be with you. And then again I shall be with you after a little while. Then you will have no doubts. All your doubts will be resolved. In fact, he is pointing out that he is within the disciples and they will behold him in his radiant form within themselves after he leaves the body, because the disciples are feeling quite frustrated that he is going to leave them. He is assuring them that while he is in the body they have so many types of doubts, but when they will behold him within, after a little while, they will have absolutely no doubt. So the Radiant Form of the Master is inside, and actually, that is Shabd, Shabd incarnate. Our real Master actually is the Sound, the Shabd. Because in the physical world, only a human being can be the teacher of a human being, so Masters have to come from that Shabd in the form of human beings to put us on the Path and again merge us back into the same ocean. Therefore we see the Master, of course, as a human being outside; inside he takes his form from that Shabd, from that universal consciousness.

Q. Then we can be said to be in contact with all Masters that ever were, once we make this contact with the Radiant Form?

A. When you contact the Master's Radiant Form, he does not leave you—he guides you to the ultimate. He does not leave you there, where he meets you, but guides you to your Home.

Q. 246. When I see his form inside I may see him in an automobile like when I saw you yesterday or I may see you wearing this clothing or that clothing? Should I try to eliminate this...?

A. Absolutely, absolutely. These are good associations to create devotion and love in your heart, but you absolutely eliminate outside movements. Just try to visualize the face of the Master within and do the Simran, the repetition of the five Holy Names.

Q. 247. Why does the Master speak of the Master inside as being a separate being?

A. This is due to modesty. This is humility. No Master will say, "I am Master". And this is the humility you will find in the teachings of all the Saints. They never like to assert themselves, never like to say "I". They always say "Thou". So it may be confusing from that point of view.

Q. 248. Is the astral form of the Master one astral form that all initiates see when they go in? Or is there one astral form with each initiate?

A. It is very difficult to say what you see. Actually it is what you know, what you feel, what you realize. When you come back into physical consciousness you may not be aware whether you have seen the eyes, or the head, or the feet, or anything. Yet you know that you have seen the Master. There is nothing physical about it; though we feel, we think we have seen him physically inside, but it is not physical. So it is more of a realization. Yet we feel we have seen him and we try to analyze; we cannot say that we have seen him; we cannot describe what we have seen. Yet we see him actually. So the Master will be the Master. There is no question of changing form. But if you say he will be in the same clothes,

or the same car, that is just a question of your own individual way of thinking, because we cannot describe what we have seen actually.

Q. What I meant was the astral form of the Master? Is there just one astral form for all the initiates?

A. It is just one Power. The sun is one. You have a thousand pitchers of water. You see the same sun in each one of them. Every pitcher does not have a different sun. The sun is the same in all the pitchers. What you see is the reflection. The Master is one. The Lord is in everyone of us. That does not mean we have so many Lords. The Lord is just one. For all disciples there is just one. He is in everyone of us and yet He is separate from everyone of us.

Q. 249. When one makes the contact within, goes in and sees the Master, does the awareness take place only in the spiritual realm, or does it also take place in the physical realm?

A. Well, it does take place in the physical body also. Yes, you feel changes in yourself by meditation. You yourself feel quite detached. Your outlook on life automatically changes. Things do not please you any more. You do not feel like being in that material atmosphere and you start shunning that society which you are so used to. So, practically, you yourself feel what changes are brought about.

Q. 250. We all realize, of course, that one day this life must come to an end. One who is initiated by a Master: Will the Master definitely meet him at death?

A. If we remain within the commandments and we practise and we do not want to come back to this world, definitely the Master will meet us at the end and will take us up. But if we compromise with the principles and we do not want to meet the Master,

then it is for him to come or not to come. We cannot demand it. We have to deserve it, but somebody has to come to take you at the time of death. Naturally, an initiate who does his spiritual practice cannot go with the Negative Power, which is Kal. Who else is there to come and take you back? We want assurances perhaps from the point of view that we may do whatever we feel like, still the Master will come and take us back. We perhaps want to justify our weaknesses, justify our not doing the spiritual practice. I think from that point of view this approach is not right. That is for the Master to come or not to come, but we should work hard. We must do our duty and then naturally he must come and take us.

If a child commits any mischief, does not behave properly, even breaks the law, the father never hands him over to the police. A father never likes his son to go to jail, but all the same the father wants to put him on the right path, so he punishes him, though he may not hand him over to the police or to the jail. That does not mean if we do not practise even then we will be accepted and taken back. We have to get punishment; sometimes perhaps the father's punishment is more severe than that of the police, but all the same there is love coupled with the idea of discipline behind this punishment; there is no revenge in the father's heart. His object is to improve the son, to make him a better human being; but he will not hand him over to the police or the district jail. Similarly, for those who come on the Path, the question of their going back to the Negative Power does not arise; but if they do bad karmas, they do not practise the right thing, they are punished. Punishment is there.

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often used to explain to us that a potter always keeps his hand under the clay which he is trying to mould. He spanks from above, probably to expand it. But his guiding hand, his helping hand is always at the bottom, just to give it a shape. Similarly, we get punishment but the guiding hand is always there. There are no failures on the Path. When we want to run, want to achieve some destination, we try to run, we fall, we get up, we run, we fall again, but as long as we know the destination is there and we sincerely try, we have got to achieve it. On the other hand, if you do not make a start at all, of course there may not be any falls, there may not be any pitfalls, but you definitely are not going towards the destination. You are not going any distance. When we try, there are sometimes pitfalls here and there, but His guiding hand, loving hand, is always there to set us right, to put us right and to help us overcome our weaknesses, to rise above them, follow the Path and merge back into Him.

The seed once sown is never destroyed. If the field is fertile and the seed is there, it is only a question of time till it comes up. It may be one rain, or two rains, or three rains. It may need watering but it is a seed that must sprout. So we who are only a part of the Master must look to it that we merge back into him. He just does not initiate us and then forget about it; he is responsible to take our soul back to the Lord. But we have to do our part. Without doing our part we are not entitled to go back. But with His grace He also makes us do our part and we achieve what we want to achieve.

Q. 251. Satsangis know that the Master appears in his Radiant

Form at the time of their death. Could you tell us about how much time is given to satsangis after their Master appears? Is it two minutes, or five minutes?

A. It depends upon the individual progress of a satsangi and his individual attachments and his individual outlook on meditation and his individual karma and the grace from the Master. So many factors are there. It may be days, it may be years, it may be months, it may be two minutes, it may be just at the last moment. You cannot fix any time for it. It differs with every individual. If we are not following the Path, we are not meditating at all, we are not living the way of Sant Mat, he may not appear. He is not bound to do so. He may if he likes, but we should try to deserve it by remaining in His commands.

Q. At least there is usually enough time for a satsangi to say good-bye to the children and kiss his wife on the cheek?

A. You mean, you are still conscious of your attachments even at the time of death? You can imagine how much meditation has helped you! Devotees refuse to recognize that they have any wife or children at the time of death. They do not want to see them. They do not want to be drawn outside. They forget they have any relation at all with anybody. That detachment we have to develop by meditation. That is the purpose of our meditation.

Q. 252. May I ask a second question? Though, Your Holiness did speak of different kinds of Masters, and Saints, and that some had a degree of karma, and perhaps would be in a different category?

A. I was trying to explain how many categories of Saints there are. How one attains to that state, I

will explain. Whether he is directly sent by the Lord, whether by the grace of a Saint he has come to that height, as by gift or inheritance, or whether he has worked hard, just as some people work very hard to become rich. Similarly, I was trying to explain the different categories, how they come, whether they are directly sent by Him, or by the grace of the Saints they have become Saints, or with their efforts they have reached that state. But when they reach that state, their way of thinking will be the same and their teachings will be the same. There can be no difference in their teachings. Whether they are born in the East or in the West, they have the same thing to teach us. It is really very easy to understand.

The Lord is One. Nobody denies this fact. Nobody dare say something different than this. And, we have to seek Him within. Everybody has to search for the Lord within himself. How can we logically think that for one part of the world there is one way of finding Him within themselves, and for another part of the world there is another way of finding Him within themselves. If He is One, He is in everyone of us and the way leading to Him is just one. It cannot be two. There is a difference in our interpretation, there is a difference in our understanding, there is a difference in our rituals and ceremonies, a difference of our dogmas. As to how much the priestly class can sway us, hold us—that may be a different thing. But, the path leading to the Source, our own original Home, which is gained by devotion to the Lord within everyone of us, is absolutely the same. There cannot be two. If with an unbiased mind we start making a research into the teachings of any Saint, born anywhere in the world, we shall find

his pure and simple teachings of spirituality to be the same as those of other Saints.

We are racially prejudiced against each other. We always think this Master is higher than that Master, and nobody tries to understand the real teachings of a Master. If we understand the teaching we will find that all Masters are the same; there is no difference in them. But, we always like to feel superior in one way or another. And when these Masters come, they want to teach, but people take pleasure in crucifying them, beheading them, slaying them, flaying them alive, putting them on red hot plates, and so forth. When they go, the people weep, cry, build big monuments and big churches. This is what history tells us.

Because we do not give any importance to their teachings we, generally, are worried about their history, where they were born, how they were born, who were their parents, who were their children, what miracles they performed. We are just being lost in these organizations and these stories. Nobody tries to tell us as to what are his purest spiritual teachings. Whether we have been able to digest those teachings within ourselves or not? If not, what is the drawback? Why can we not digest those teachings? Why cannot those teachings become a part of our life? Nobody cares to find answers to these questions. If we make those teachings a part of our life, we will rise above all these prejudices and everybody will look the same to us then. We will never look at each other as an American, or an African, or an Indian or a Christian, or a Hindu, or a Sikh; we will all look to each other as humans, sons of the same Father, struggling to go back to the same original Home.

We come much closer to each other. But, nobody tries to look from that angle at all.

We have our own goggles, our own colored glasses through which we want to look. We do not try to remove them, we do not try to throw them away, we do not try to look at things with the naked eye. We are so much under the influence, of these political priests, or of these dogmas or rituals, organizations, that even if we feel it, we do not raise our voice. We know what has been done to those who have raised their voices. But what is given to us today in the shape of religion is not the real spiritual teachings of the saints. Their teachings are much deeper, much simpler. Teachings for realizing the Lord are so simple, so very simple that we do not understand them. It is the habit of the human mind to create problems and then try to solve them, and take pleasure in solving them. We cannot accept simple thinking in a simple way. Truths are so simple that we cannot accept them. If anybody takes three hours to explain the same simple thing, you say you have understood it. If he tells you in two words, you do not understand at all what he has told you. We have so much complicated ourselves with the intellect that we cannot accept simple truths.

Q. 253. Disciples of the Master accept the Master as the genuine Deity, but actually in practice they do not know it at all. They know it only when he appears to them in his Radiant Form inside, for it is then that they see him as he is. However, I think it is all right to accept the Master, who we think is very right by his grace, but what I mean is that is not the be-all and end-all. There are lots of professors that can talk the same language in the most beautiful way, and expressive and divine order, but when it comes to practice, some of these great men fall short, so that is the criterion for

a perfect Master Saint? I mean, we should be honest with ourselves.

A. Brother, you are exactly right in what you are trying to analyze. In one of our meetings, I discussed it, that we must make a thorough research before we submit ourselves to any Master. Even if our whole life is spent in making investigation, making a research, it is not time lost, it is time gained. We are building on a very deep foundation, we are building on a rock. So, we should not be deceived by the emotions, we should not be deceived by the masses or mass psychology, nor should we be deceived by the speeches. We have to make an inner research within our self to know the right or the wrong Master. And once we are convinced, then we should forget about this research. We should give it a fair trial, but we have first to accept it. If we are happy within ourselves, we must give it a fair trial, then perhaps we may know, but perhaps still we may not know. His Grace is required to put us on the right Path, to bring us in contact with the right Master. We have a very limited intellect with which to find out. We can be deceived. We have to depend entirely upon His Grace for guidance, real guidance. And, if we are sincere, I assure you, He puts us on the right Path. He *does* guide us. It may take time; it is a question of some opportunity; but if we are sincere, He will definitely put us on the right Path.

Q. 254. Are Masters aware of each other?

A. To some extent they are.

Q. Are they aware of new Masters?

A. You mean when they reach that stage they know

each other? Yes, they do. They are just waves of the same ocean, of that Power. The body is not the Master. We need a body to explain to a body. The Master needs a body. The disciple needs a body.

Q. 255. Who, in your opinion, was the first Master? And who was his Master?

A. You mean by first Master, the first since the creation of the earth? The Lord Himself!

Q. A physical man, a physical man?

A. Many Masters have come to this world, many Masters will still come into this world. If we try to make a story-telling search perhaps it could lead us nowhere. We are always concerned with our own Master. He is the Lord to us. He is God to us. We have to look just to our own Master and nobody else. We are not concerned how many Masters have been in this world before, or how many Masters are present, or how many Masters will come after us. We are only concerned with our Master and he is everything to us.

Q. I agree with you there but you did not answer my question.

A. But I do not understand your question. You are interested in the history of how the Mastership began?

Q. No, I meant this, if it takes a living Master to bring you back to God, then how did the first Master make it, if he did not have a Master?

A. The Lord was his Master. He sent him.

Q. 256. Someone wrote: "Let us not kid ourselves. I believe, and I think all satsangis believe too, that if the Radha Soami Faith would advertise and let it be known that one does not have to quit

his religion, or his church, to become a satsangi then the membership in New York City would increase by leaps and bounds. But when a foreign religion is presented, people are timid and also are ashamed to become identified with an oriental cult." Please express your opinion about these matters?

A. Well, brothers, you know that we are not interested in numbers. I am only interested in the seekers, in the real seekers, the true seekers, whether they are one, or thousands. And our books are full of this assurance that in order to follow the Path to God-Realization, in order to find the Way within, in order to seek the Lord within, we have neither to change our religion, nor do we have to convert others to any other religion, nor do we have to leave our family, or our duties. We have to live in the world and yet be not of the world. We are not to attach ourselves to all these things. Actually speaking, I personally feel if we know the real teachings of the saints, the spirituality, the mysticism which they come to preach, and we follow that, we will become better Christians, we will become better Muslims, we will become better Hindus, and we will have deeper faith in our own religion if we just learn or understand the real teachings taught by those saints.

Generally, we give importance to rituals and ceremonies and dogmas. Perhaps we think those things are the be-all and end-all of religion. The real essence of religion, the real teachings, the Truth of such religion is lost. Saints always come to remind us of Truth, of Reality, which is the basis of every religion. The question of changing from one religion to another religion does not arise. Every discourse, every book is full of the assurance that in order to meet or go back to the Lord what is required is devotion,

practice, spirituality, the love of the Lord and not conversion from one religion to another religion. By converting ourselves, by leaving one religion, or by adopting another religion, we do not become entitled to meet Him. It is the Truth, the Reality, the Spirituality which is to take us from here to the Lord. So Saints always give importance to that Truth, that Reality, that Spirituality. They never try to convert us.

And the question of advertisement does not arise. We do not believe in advertisement as there is nothing commercial about these teachings. This Sant Mat, or the Path, or the Radha Soami Faith, or whatever name you may give it, is for the seekers, the real seekers, who want to find Him, who want to do spiritual practice in order to detach themselves from the world and attach themselves to the Lord. So, I do not believe in such things nor do I encourage any advertisement. Those who really want, they always seek, they always find. And those who do not want, they do not seek. Advertisement does not make any difference for them. I do not believe in advertisement, our books are very clear. They assure us that to follow this Path the question of changing one's religion does not arise.

Q. 257. Does a guiding hand pull people to you?

A. You mean somebody guiding?

Q. Yes, guides individuals to you?

A. I do not follow your point.

Q. I mean, does the hand of God pull people to you during their lifetime?

A. You have read in The Bible, you are a preacher,

you know that Christ said that he had been sent for the marked sheep, marked souls. The hand of God is at the back. They will come to Christ, those who are marked for him. They are his sheep, and they will come to him. They will be brought back to him. You call it coincidence. There are no coincidences here. You do not know how one is being drawn to that side, what had led us to come to that side. So many factors have played a part, then suddenly we find that we are on the Path. When we try to analyze it, we have no explanation for it. Suddenly, overnight, we feel the teachings appeal to us. How simple they are! Why did we not think about it before? But it is not very sudden, for we do not know how many things we had to rough through to come to this. We call it just coincidence, but there are no coincidences.

Q. 258. Is there a link in between the initiate and the Master?

A. Yes, as you have read in The Bible, Christ has referred to it somewhere by saying that I have been sent by the Father and I have been sent only to collect those whom He has marked. I have just come to collect my sheep and take them back to the Father. Every Saint is sent into this world for particular souls —allotted souls, and those souls alone will come to him. They alone will have faith in him. They alone will be receptive to his teachings. They alone will practise meditation and go back to the Father. So it is always with the Grace of the Father that a disciple is drawn to the Master, and the Master initiates him and he works his way back to the Lord.

Q. 259. Master, I have read in the literature where souls who are initiated are marked before their birth. Why is it that some of us

reach the age of forty or fifty or sixty years, living lives contrary to Sant Mat, eating meat, and so forth? Why is so much of our life spent in a manner contrary to the teachings of Sant Mat?

A. There are many barriers in our way. Unless we clear them, we cannot come on the Path. There are so many karmic barriers which have to be cleared before we can come back on the Path. And some people take a few years to clear them; some people take more years to clear them. Some just get a little time in Sant Mat, and some are initiated even two days before their death. This just depends on the individual. It does not mean that right from birth everybody can be put on the Path, or everybody starts meditation. Whenever an individual's karmas bring round the proper time, he comes on the Path.

Q. 260. Why do some satsangis in this life have to go through three or four various religions and different paths before they come to the Radha Soami Path, whereas others come directly to the Radha Soami Path from their first religion, which they were born into?

A. It is very simple. Each seeker is being driven to the Path according to his own karma. For some it is the first time on the Path. For some it is the second time. With some it is the third time; while with others it is the fourth time. So everybody does not take a start right from 'A'. Some have already taken a start, they just pick up the thread and get going. Naturally, everybody has to take a start from where he left off. You may have read in The Bible about the sower and the seed. Some seeds just fall on the ground, which is not ploughed and which is not worth yielding any fruit at all. So the seed lies there, and when the rain falls, it comes out a little and withers again. Some seeds fall on the rocky land, but also wither after

coming up. And some seeds fall on absolutely fertile land which is properly cultivated. They alone yield fruit. But the seed is sown everywhere, sooner or later the seed definitely yields fruit. Every seed takes its own time to give fruit. So we cannot say that all of us start from the same step. Some are on the first step, some have already traveled a few steps, some are just about near the top, and need only a little push to go ahead. So everybody has his own way of starting.

Q. 261. Maharaj Ji, does one first have to attain the two and one-half hours a day meditation before he becomes an initiate?

A. No, sister. There is a little misunderstanding about it. We should *try* to devote two hours and thirty minutes in our meditation. But if you think that from the very day you start you can sit for two hours and thirty minutes, it is not possible. It is not possible at all. You are not used to giving so much time to meditation. So you can start with one hour, slowly and slowly increase your time and gradually add to your daily time. Your target should be at least two hours and thirty minutes. It is not that if we cannot sit for two hours and thirty minutes the very first day, we should not come to the Path. We have to fight with our mind, to give more and more time to meditation. It is a constant fight with the mind. And if some day we cannot give it, we should not feel guilty about it; because it is not the mechanical meditation that helps us so much as the atmosphere of meditation which we build around us by meditation. We have to live in that atmosphere of meditation. The whole day is to be spent in that atmosphere. It is not the two hours and thirty minutes sitting in medi-

tation and then forgetting all about Sant Mat, and letting the mind run loose here or there. That is not the right attitude. By devoting our time we have to live the whole day in that Sant Mat atmosphere. So we should try to increase our time gradually every day.

Q. 262. When they speak of one Initiation, I was wondering if there are not more than one Initiation and some of these Initiations cannot take place on this earth and have to take place in the spiritual world? If you initiate someone, does he have the same status as you after having undergone, having spent hundreds and hundreds of Initiations in previous lives?

A. Brother, the seed has to be sown while one is in the human form, and once this seed is sown then that Initiation, that help, can also take place inside us, on the internal stages. But first the seed has to be sown while in this physical form. Unless that seed is sown in the physical form, we do not get internal Initiation at all. That is why this body is known as the top of the creation. Only by being in this body can we be shown the light, the wisdom, the Path.

Whether we have made much spiritual progress or not while being in the body does not make any difference. If the seed has been sown while being in the body, we can make spiritual progress inside. But it must start while being in the physical body.

Q. 263. So when we are initiated what happens?

A. Then you know the process of being in touch with the Shabd. You are internally in touch with the Shabd.

Q. We are made conscious of it then?

A. That is right. You are made conscious of it

and you are put in touch with it also. A drop of water is on the ground. In the sun there is always warmth—heat. But when it concentrates, only then the drop of water leaves the ground, evaporates. So Shabd is in everyone of us irrespective of whether we are initiated or not, but Saints concentrate us, so to say, they put us in touch with Shabd and then with the practice of that, with the help of Shabd, the mind withdraws from the senses and then the soul withdraws from the mind. Otherwise, Shabd is in everyone of us.

Q. 264. I think that Mr. Replogle stated that before Initiation one should repeat the word Radha Soami.

A. That is what we generally tell everyone who applies but who is not yet ready for Initiation. Thus he gets into the habit of trying to concentrate, which helps in the end.

Q. 265. .....Two-fold purpose?

A. You are at the other end of the world from India, so it is really a special Grace of the Supreme Father that certain marked souls here could have their contact or blessing through the Great Master who happened to be born in India. Without that Grace it was impossible, as you know, to search for that Great Master or to know anything about that Great Master or to find such a Great Living Master in the world, at that time living in India. It is really the special Grace of the Lord that the marked souls in this country came in contact with that Great Master and were put on the Path.

Every soul, as Maharaj Ji (the Great Master) said, has two great purposes: The first is to prepare

your own way, to make your own spiritual development, to get rid of illusion of the mind and make your soul purer. Just to know ourselves and merge back into the Lord: that is the function of every marked soul. These souls are selected just for this purpose so that they may get the opportunity or get those facilities to make themselves pure, to make themselves worthy to go and merge back into the Lord.

And then, when we are on the Path and meditating, our influence naturally affects others in our surroundings, our relations and our friends. By being a living example of a good satsangi, we naturally influence our surroundings and people who come in contact with us. By being a good example we will influence them much more than by discussing or explaining the teachings to them. They find that radiance, they find that peace, they find that bliss, that contentment in us. They find us absolutely changed human beings as far as they can see, and naturally they are anxious to know what has come into us, what has brought about that wonderful change in us. Also, when they have found out that we are better human beings, they are naturally influenced by the way we live. So we can put others on the Path in a much better and finer way by ourselves becoming an example of Sant Mat, the example of being a true initiate.

Every soul has a two-fold purpose: First, to help ourselves, to get redemption from the mind, to get release from the mind, to make ourselves purer and second, to help others to come on the Path. Naturally, when anyone gets something very precious, he is always anxious to share it with those whom he loves. He is anxious to share that treasure with his

friends and with the people in whom he is interested. All satsangis, I know from my own experience, are always anxious to share the Path, that enlightenment, that wisdom of the Path, with all their associates, with all their friends. In this way every soul has a two-fold purpose; to work for himself and to work for others by being a living example, which is befitting a disciple of a Great Master.

9. (iv) SAINTS AND SUFFERINGS, GENUINE PEACE

Q. 266. I read in some of the Sant Mat books that Shamas-i-Tabriz was flayed alive and Jesus was crucified. I was just wondering why Masters of that spiritual stature have been subjected to that kind of physical violence?

A. It is really very unfortunate that all these Saints had to go through all these tortures. It is simply because the worldly people never like them, and their teachings are a little bold. Saints do not come to create any religions—they do not come to conform to all the rituals and ceremonies which we are used to, because that is a profession for the priests, and when they preach their real teachings of Saints, naturally, those professionals do not like it. As a result the Saints generally have to face all sorts of troubles and tortures. Otherwise, they never do anything which we cannot understand. They are never harmful to society. If you read the history of their lives, you will find that their only "fault" is that they want to save us from the cycle of birth and death, they want us to detach ourselves from the worldly possessions and the worldly loves, and they want to attach us to the Lord. They do not accept money. They do not interfere in any religion. They do not recruit people to fight one nation against another.

Saints only awaken the love of the Lord within us, but people are so much tied to each other, so much tied to their creeds, and are such slaves of old rituals, that they feel that probably the Saints are heathens. What are they going to do with us? they ask. So they crucify them; kill them; flay them alive and try to torture them in so many ways. And when those

Saints leave, then the very same people weep for them, worship them; but while they were living nobody recognized them—nobody gave them their due. After the saints go back, then again the people come under the sway of the priests, the professionals, I would call them. Those professionals, in the name of those very saints, again want to keep the people under their sway. Again the people, of course, in the manner prescribed by the priests, worship them and love them. In this way these professionals will not let the people understand the real teachings of those Saints, which would enable them to worship and love God within themselves, as designated by Him, through His saints.

Q. 267. Why do Sant Sat Gurus, like Kabir, Mansur, Gobind Singh and others, suffer violent death? Or suffer lingering diseases like Sawan Singh and Jagat Singh? Are they still in possession of some karmas of their own that have to be paid, or do they pay some of the karmas taken off their disciples to promote their spiritual progress?

A. Both are right. As I explained yesterday, there are three types of Saints. Some come from the Supreme Father just for this purpose. They are ready. They need only the light of a match to light that candle. Everything is there; the oil is there, the wick is there, everything is ready. They need only a spark to become a lighted candle. And for others, everything has to be collected, a wick is to be collected and wax is to be collected and it has to be moulded, made into a candle, and then lit. It also becomes the same type of candle when once lit. In the first category are those who come direct from the Father and in the second class are those who work their way up and those who become Masters by special endow-

ment, as by gift or inheritance from the Lord. Saints come for the purpose of enlightening us and merging us back into Him. Then those Saints also make other disciples and bring them up to the same level. They make them Saints to carry on their work.

All Saints have some karma to go through in this world, for without karma there can be no physical body; but mostly it is the portions of the karmas of their disciples that they take on themselves. They help their disciples in many ways; physical ways, mental ways, spiritual ways. Sometimes we think they are suffering. They are not suffering. They are helping us, they are sharing. Some of their karmas may be their own, also, but they are not affected by those karmas. They can pay them in a second. Karmas do not pull them. They have to have karma in order to live in this world, just as everybody has to have some karma to live in this world. Because karmas are under them, they control karma; they are not victims of the karma.

When a Saint comes into this world, he must have a mother and a father. He has to live, he has to work. So nothing can be done without karma. But he is not a slave of the karmas. He can refuse to take on or he may share the karmas of his disciples or others because saints are very soft-hearted, kind-hearted and always like to help. They even help people at the expense of their own bodies. So both things are right.

Q. 268. Maharaj Ji, yesterday a person asked me if a Guru can sometimes give away part of his Grace to anybody else, and would he be any poorer for it in his spiritual life? And I said, "No, he has such an abundant reservoir that he would not, by giving away a portion of it." This person then asked me, "Then, why should a

Master suffer from any disease, or be unwell, physically, at the time of his death?"

A. Saints sometimes do take the karmas of their disciples and, being in the domain of Kal, they themselves have to account for those karmas on their bodies. That is why we feel that they are suffering physically, from health point of view. Actually, they are above the cycle of karmas and can clear any karma. They do not like to break the law of nature, being in the domain of Kal. So, we may think they are suffering. Really, the soul is not at all bothered with what the body is going through.

There is never a deficiency of what they give. The more they give, the more it grows. It is just like love. The more we are helpful to others, the more we feel like helping others and the more it grows every day. The question of deficiency does not arise. Being in this world, they do not like to break God's law. So, sometimes, they help their disciples by taking their karmas on their own bodies. The soul does not suffer at all.

Q. 269. Do you think that Jesus, having been crucified, assuming that he was, that it had any significance? Other Saints have died naturally, I assume, but he was martyred?

A. No, sister. I do not agree with you. The fate of all the Saints has been the same. You know only of Christ. I have read the lives of so many Saints who had to meet the same fate. The world does not tolerate them. People are so much in fear, so much attached to each other, so much enslaved by dogmas, rituals and religions that they cannot bear them. Saints do not appeal to them, so they want to do away with them. At least three or four Gurus were

crucified the same way, and some Muslim mystics were burned alive. Some Saints were flayed alive; others were made to sit on red hot iron plates; still others were put alive in boiling water. If you read the history of the Saints, you will find that it is really terrible what they had to face. Now people worship them. Still, I think, they are not worshiping them in the true sense; for the condition, the lot of the Saints, is still the same. If Jesus were to come among us today, perhaps he would meet the same fate.

Q. My question was that in his death, did he do something for us? As remission for sins?

A. Perhaps he was setting an example that, having everything with him, he did not want to use his power. That may have been the lesson that he wanted to give us: the lesson to resign ourselves to the Will of the Lord, "Thy Will be done". He knows best.

Q. 270. Could you say that the death of Socrates was another example?

A. Yes. If you start analyzing and quoting, you will find almost every Saint had to go through the same fate. It is only because people do not understand them and do not like them and so become prejudiced; otherwise they can find no fault. Saints have never committed any crime against society. They are the best citizens, to whatever country they may belong and whatever society they may be born into. But they are a little bold to shake people from their roots, to which they are so badly tied. Actually, these people think they are the devotees of the Lord, but they are not. They are devotees of the organizations. They are devotees of the professionals. They are

devotees of the old rituals and ceremonies. The real philosophy, real spirituality, which is the base of every religion, they absolutely forget. The Saints again come to remind them of the purpose of that particular religion, the purpose of spirituality. The professionals or priestly class never liked it, so the Saints had to face all these tortures at their hands.

Q. 271. Quite clear, but I was thinking in reference to that also, are the Great Masters who are supposed to be perfect and are karmaless, that they are sacrificed, they are condemned, they are crucified in one way or another, does that not mean that they hope to have karma or they could not be crucified?

A. There are many reasons for it. Sometimes they have to set an example to the world. Sometimes they take the karmas of the disciples on themselves, and make their own body endure them. And yet if they want to escape it, they can escape from their situation.

Q. In what way do they escape it? What do you mean, crucifixion, for instance?

A. They can escape it if they want to. They are all-powerful from that point of view. But, do they actually want to be crucified? Who wants to be crucified? Not even a Master. They just do not bother. It does not hurt them at all. You see, the physical body is not the Master. They leave the body. When they leave the body every day, at will, it makes no difference what you do with their body. Crucifixion takes place only as far as the world is concerned, as far as our physical eyes are concerned. A Saint actually cannot be crucified.

Q. 272. Can a real true Saint promote his longevity?

A. They do not like to. They are always in tune

with the Lord. They do what He wants them to do. They can, if they want to, but they do not like to, they never do it. They have their allotted task to perform and when that is finished they are eager to go back.

Q. 273. You have spoken of happiness—becoming one with God, what about accomplishments in this world? There are a number of people who have done great things, but who have ended up being very unhappy. How do you feel about that?

A. You mean people who have achieved great things and yet are unhappy?

Q. Yes, well take someone like Voltaire, who undoubtedly was miserable all his life, yet he made a great contribution?

A. Well, brother, you are proving my point that whatever we may do in this world, we can never be happy. We will get the deserts of the good deeds that we do, but we will have to come back to reap the fruits of those good deeds. At the most you can go to heaven. You may get a much richer birth, better birth, but true heppiness you will claim or can get only when you go back to Him. Worldly achievements can never give you permanent happiness. You may be a king, you may be a ruler, you may do good to the world, but your good deeds alone will never take you back to the Lord. However, you will definitely get the fruit or reward. From 'C' class prisoner you will become an 'A' class prisoner. Instead of iron chains you will be bound with golden chains. From small huts you will be taken to palaces. That is all, nothing else. All the same you will remain a prisoner.

Yesterday I gave an example that all philanthrop-

ists do good to the prisoners, by improving their lot, but in spite of everything, the prisoners remain prisoners. Another man comes with the key of that prison-house, he opens the gate and sets all prisoners free. Saints just come for that purpose, to set us free from the world. They do not come to solve our problems. They come to help us to rise above these problems. You can never clear the thorns of the world, but you can definitely put strong shoes on your feet, and the thorns will not affect you. Saints give us the faith to live in this world, and yet not to be affected by this world. There are great philanthropists in this world, great people who have come and gone. Spirituality is something completely different.

Q. 274. If the world is becoming worse and worse, after it becomes so evil, will it destroy itself?

A. No, sister. The world was like this, is like this, and will remain like this. History does not encourage us to believe that there was ever peace in this world. Nations always have been fighting against each other. People always have been killing each other. Tribes always have been fighting one another for existence. The fate of the world will remain the same. There will never be peace in the world, there never was peace in the world. As long as the mind is there, human conflict will remain the same. The question is one of degree, sister. Sometimes there is a little more conflict, sometimes a little less. The purpose of the Saints is to take us away. We are all prisoners here. The purpose of the saints is to unlock the prison-house, to set us free. That is their mission, their purpose and that is what their teachings tell us.

Q. 275. Now I want to come back to the topic of the Ten Commandments. The Israelites were wandering aimlessly, and were the Ten Commandments not meant to put the people in check?

A. Have it that way then. Why are we fighting in this world? What have the Ten Commandments done for us today? Have we improved? Have the Ten Commandments been obeyed? Without a living Master it is impossible to obey the first two Commandments, for he alone can give us the key and teach us how to love God and worship Him, and how to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Q. It brought us a little way, I mean we went one little step?

A. I ask, have we improved?

Q. Not a notch?

A. Brother, I tell you. I have already told you that so many Saints have come into this world. Not only Moses, but so many other Saints have come. Have we improved as human beings? I do not find it so. We boast about killing hundreds of thousands with one bomb. Our ancestors only used to stab each other. Probably they could kill one or two in a lifetime. We have killed hundreds and thousands every day. Our ancestors used to kill one bird for their food. Our machines kill millions every day. We boast. You say we have improved. We have improved because we are living in palaces instead of under trees.

Q. 276. I think there are churches here and in other cities, which some how are teaching very good ideologies, and I believe they are also received, I would say by about ten per cent of the crowd.

A. In spite of all this preaching of ideology, we have not improved, brother. That is what I say. I do

not blame the teaching. I do not blame the Saints. They always try to do their best. But this world will never improve. If it could improve, it would have improved by the coming of Saints, great Saints. We never listen to them. We presume we listen to them but really we do not listen to them.

Q. 277. So the doing of miracles, all of this has nothing to do with the Kingdom of God?

A. No. Miracles and all that, I said, they do happen. Saints are generally very kind-hearted, but performing miracles is not their mission in life. Sometimes miracles do happen in the lifetime of saints, but they do not intentionally want to do it. They do not want to deviate from the laws of nature. If Christ had done all those miracles intentionally, he would not have said, "Thy Will be done". He would not have said that we have to submit to the Will of the Lord. It means that we should face our fate karmas with His Grace, boldly and gladly. Whatever is in our lot, we have to face that. Saints do not like to interfere with that, but miracles do happen. I do not say that they do not perform them. They do happen, but they do not give any importance to these things. The supernatural powers do come within us when we meditate, but Saints do not want us to use those supernatural powers, because one always does so at one's own cost. If we begin to use them, we will lose all that we have. So Christ also told Satan, "Begone!" He did not want to be tempted by all those supernatural powers.

10. GROUP MEETINGS

Q. 278. I would like to ask the possibility of starting groups, if it is possible to contact other people who believe along these lines, to get together? Groups should be established so that the teachings can expand.

A. Possibility of holding groups?

Q. No, to start groups, so that—?

A. Brother, we are so few in number that it would be an unnecessary burden on initiates, on satsangis to spend money and to make places and then to collect there. Then there may be some differences in organization. I do not want satsangis to be lost in organizations or in management of those organizations and forget the real objective of Initiation. When the number of initiates increases, we may find it necessary, and that time may come. But now I think there is hardly any need. We have a limited number of satsangis in almost every big city. So we can hold meetings in homes, as we do now, gathering in different houses, in various cities.

Q. 279. . . . To talk about Beas in the Punjab, how it started...at first it was a small group and then...and now...they are building new houses and a big place where people can gather?

A. Brother, the atmosphere in India is quite different from that in the States. I think you people have to work very hard for your living because your standard of living is very high. And that place, Beas, was not started as an organization; it just developed because the founder, after whom that Colony is named, came there without any intention to start a center. Rather, he found a place which was deserted, where nobody

would ever think of going, just on the wild bank of the Beas River, which was all bushes and ravines, not even level ground, because he wanted a quiet place for meditation. Well, wherever there is honey the flies come. So the seekers and devotees started coming and he accepted them. Thus slowly and slowly that has developed into a Colony. That is something quite different. I think it is not possible to make such a place here unless some Master stays here, because all these things revolve around that personality. They are not planned and made; they just develop. So when that opportunity comes, we shall see to it then.

Q. 280. Maharaj Ji, in our various satsangs we do not always have perfect harmony. I think our average is better than many of the other institutions, but still it lacks perfection and from my limited point of view, it appears the root of it is jealousy or envy among satsangis. How can we as satsangis, not me particularly as the representative, but we generally as satsangis, avoid this difficulty?

A. This is a very difficult question to answer because, sometimes, I too become the object of jealousy among the satsangis, and I have to experience a lot of difficulty. To me everybody is the same, but some people, for some reason, which perhaps even they do not know, think they are nearer. Others think they are a little away from me. We have to analyze what jealousy is. I have something and the other person cannot get that and he is jealous. He wants to get what I am possessing. From there it starts,—to possess what the other person is possessing, and being incapable of possessing it, one starts being jealous of the other. If we are materially minded—and we are now becoming every day more materially minded, whether it is con-

scious or unconscious—we are quite jealous. All are running this race of materialism, after these worldly objects and achieving these worldly possessions. It is actually making us a jealous nation, a jealous person, whether we realize it or not. We are every day becoming more jealous in our attitude for everything. My neighbor has a good car, I have an old one. I must have another car. I work. I am jealous. Why can I not have what he has? Slowly and slowly it becomes a habit to be jealous of each other.

But in Sant Mat there should be no jealousy. The question of jealousy does not arise at all. Sometimes one feels that perhaps the Master is giving more attention to a particular disciple or has left attending to other disciples. Then he starts becoming jealous, but he does not know how much attention he needs and how much the other person needs. There is a beautiful parable, which I can never forget. I read in the Bible that a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one goes astray. The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine sheep and goes after the hundredth sheep which has gone astray from the flock. He goes after that sheep, and the other ninety-nine think he is ignoring them. He brings back that sheep to the flock. Now if the ninety-nine sheep start becoming jealous of that other sheep, thinking that the shepherd is giving more attention to that one, how far are they justified? A sheep that has gone astray has to be brought back again to the fold. So the question of jealousy does not arise. The shepherd loves all the sheep, and anybody who goes astray will perhaps get a little more attention from the shepherd.

In a class, some students do not give any attention to their studies. They are displeased with the back

benches. They do something to the teacher in order to draw his attention so that he will ask them to come to the front row. It is not that the teacher does not like the intelligent or the well-behaved students. Perhaps those students on the back benches needed more attention. So if the other students start getting jealous, demanding to know why those students have been given a front seat and more attention, and not they, there is something wrong in their way of thinking.

If we cannot rise above these small differences, petty human jealousies, I think we have not understood the real teachings of Sant Mat at all. You see, there is a difference between physical love and spiritual love. Jealousy comes in physical love, when we are conscious of others. We are jealously possessing certain things and we fear other persons might deprive us of them. So we are jealous. It means that each of us is conscious of the other person, besides the beloved. But in Sant Mat there is only One Beloved. You become unconscious that anybody else exists in the world for you. Jealousy only starts where you are conscious of any body else existing besides the Beloved. But when you are in love with the Master, when you are in love with the teachings, when you are in love with the Lord, you automatically rise so much higher and forget about the whole world. You are not conscious of anybody else existing in the world at all. You see only the Lord everywhere. Then you get rid of jealousy.

When we try to monopolize, we think that we must have something and that the other person should not have it. As far as the world is concerned that may be true that one person is getting more attention than the other, but as far as the Master is concerned,

he has equal love for every disciple. They may think he has given certain others more love, but he knows it is not so. I have told you that some students definitely need more attention than other students. So each one gets attention according to his needs at the time. Everybody needs love, some perhaps need a little more to understand what that is. But the Master is gracious and equally gives his love to everybody, to every disciple, in the same way. Some people, due to their past sanskaras or past associations, do surround him or come nearer to him, but that does not mean that the Master loves them more than those on the back benches, or those who are silent, or those who do not exchange words or exchange letters. It is wrong for them to think so; perhaps he loves them much more, and they have his attention more than those who are surrounding him. So there is no room for jealousy in Sant Mat. The question of becoming jealous does not arise at all. We must try to rise above these petty differences.

That day I tried to say in my address, the nearer we are to the Lord, the nearer we feel to each other. The more we are away from the Lord, the more we are drifting away from each other. So if we have real devotion to the Lord, real devotion and yearning to meet Him, we will also be nearer to each other. We will also love each other. We will also be good neighbors and good friends. Harmony and good association among us will also grow. If that real devotion is not in us, we really are not near Him, and we will have so many differences among ourselves. So the more we love the Lord, the more that love will bring us near to each other. That is loving thy neighbour. Christ also said words to that effect

when he said that those who loved him also loved one another. Actually, when one loves the Master, love for others is automatically created in him. Automatically such lovers feel that they are nearer to each other. There is a certain understanding between them which is lacking in other people. There is something which brings them together. There is a certain bond which is unknowingly bringing them nearer and nearer to each other.

Jealousy comes when we have organizations, administration and offices like secretaries and presidents. When we start thinking about the offices, then we, sometimes become victims of all these things. We forget that all these offices are for the purpose of rendering service. Service means what we are doing to please the Master and to be of utility to the public and to that organization. Service is not for bossing. This presidentship or secretaryship is something very different from what we have in the outside organizations. This is to eliminate the ego, but we try to weigh all these things in the same scale, in the same way we are used to doing in our daily training in worldly matters. So actually there should be absolutely no jealousy in any group. There should be no hatred towards anybody. When we hate anybody, actually we are hating ourselves. We have not risen above that, to where we can see the equality in everyone. There should be absolutely no jealousy. We should have harmony, and the more harmony, the nearer we are to each other and to the Lord.

You have read so often in the Bible that if you have any ill feeling, any grievance, anything against anybody, first go and ask for his forgiveness; otherwise your prayer will not be accepted. The Lord will not

forgive you if you have not forgiven everybody else. It means that we have to pray with an open heart, with a clean heart, with a meek and humble heart. Except for the Lord there should be nothing. The object behind Christ's saying is this: if our heart is full of malice, jealousy, or hatred that is not a pure heart, and our prayer will never be accepted unless we have a pure heart. So, in order to make it pure, we have to drive out all sorts of ill feelings and jealousy and everything we have against anybody. When it becomes pure, the prayer is accepted. If we do not forgive anyone, how do we expect the Lord to forgive us? First we must earn it by our own example, that we forgive people. Naturally we can then ask the Lord to forgive us our sins. So you see, every saint has been trying to tell us the same thing, that we should absolutely have no ill feeling against anybody. But because we are humans and have the instinct of possession, we become the victims of jealousy.

If I have any problem with satsangis, I think I have only this problem: Sometimes they do become jealous of each other. I have had personal experience of many such situations. For example, I remember in India, when I go to a home they all love me and I, of course, love them. I ask for a glass of water. Six or seven persons run out and bring a glass of water each. I do not know from whom to take the water. I know that the others will feel jealous, so I just excuse myself, saying that I think I do not need it. These are very petty things but they go a long way. I know my people. I was not conscious of these things in the beginning, but now I think I am quite a little trained for these things. Somebody

makes a cup of tea for me and somebody else presents it, and they have differences between each other, "He asked me, he meant me, and you have given him the cup of tea" and this and that, and they start quarreling for no reason at all. Rather, it should make us happy. Does it not make us happy if more people come to the Path? It does make us happy. So it should make us happy to see others like us holding our own ideas, our own principles, our own Master, the Lord. It should rather make us happy.

The trouble is that we wish to exclude others, just to possess the Master ourselves. This is a wrong conception of love. We should be forgiving to everybody and we can pity people but we cannot hate them. That is wrong. We should have absolutely no ill feeling or grudge against anybody, or such thoughts as "he got a favor and I did not get a favor. He got time to talk and I did not get more time to talk. He was invited to come to India and I was not invited to come to India." These are all petty things. Sometimes I just do not understand. We have to rise above all these small things in order to have the real devotion of the Lord. On the path of love there is no jealousy. Everybody is absorbed in love. Everybody is loving. If there is any jealousy, Mr. Replogle, I can only request them to rise above it, to rise above such differences. If they do not, sometimes I think I have not been able to do my duty to help them rise above these things; that I have failed, they have not failed.

There should be absolutely no jealousy at all in satsangis. We should have open feelings for everybody. Everybody wants to do something for the Master, something for the Lord, something for the Path, and we should have open arms for everybody to

do so. It is not a monopoly of anybody. Everybody has a heart. Everybody wants to do the same thing and we should give a chance to everybody to do the same thing. And naturally everybody's circumstances do not permit it, so no one has reason to be jealous if he cannot do it. He can say that the Lord got it done. He should like those people that are doing it. They should be appreciated. They should be loved because they are doing it, and not that other people be jealous because they are doing it. We should also try to do it; not by becoming jealous, but by becoming more helpful to them, by becoming more useful to them.

Q. 281. Maharaj Ji, when we are having satsang and sometimes we have beginner satsangis who answer another person's question. When they answer the question and some of the older satsangis know that the answer is wrong, should we just let it go or should the older satsangis give the correct answer?

A. Sister, I have just said we can only share with others what we have. If we know the answer, we should try to help them. If we do not know it, we can refer to the books. If you cannot find it, you are most welcome to write to me. We have to help each other. Of course, we can only help with what we know—what we have—what we share.

Q. But, if we just know through the books, should we just sit quiet?

A. No, you can quote from the book and very lovingly and gently point out what seems to be the right answer, as mentioned in the book. If anybody is in conflict with himself or in doubt, he can write. As I explained to your group in Detroit, there must be harmony amongst satsangis, there must be love amongst

satsangis. There must be an atmosphere to help each other, not an atmosphere to boss over the new initiates or to think ourselves superior to others. No, with very loving and helpful attitude, we have to help them and to make them understand the light, the wisdom, the Path. You see, we have to build the atmosphere of love and peace around us in which we have to live and meditate. If that is not there, there is absolutely no sense of group meetings. We do not come there to show our differences. We do not come there to show our superiority. And such meetings should not be dinners and parties and this and that. These are not the proper attitudes for group meetings. We have to do the least of the organization matters in these group meetings.

The object of group meetings is just to create a healthy atmosphere for meditation, to build that atmosphere of love in which we have to meditate, in which we have to live, that should become a fort for us to live in this world. That is the object of Satsang and group meetings, to clear people's doubts, to make the Path clearer to them, to create devotion, love and faith in them. That should be the object of group meetings, of satsang. If there is wrangling, if there is pushing and there are differences, I do not find any useful purpose in such group meetings at all. There should be strengthening of effort in every group meeting that we attend. In every group meeting we should feel that our love has been strengthened for the Master, there is more devotion in us now for meditation, and we should be filled with a desire to meditate. There is more peace within us after attending such group meetings. That should be the object of group meetings.

And seniors have certain responsibilities to the new initiates, to give them a welcome smile, to give them a welcome home feeling, to make them feel welcome in these meetings, and to give them the feeling of equality in the meetings. We have a certain responsibility to be helpful to others, mainly by our attitude and good example. The group meetings serve the proper purpose only if there is absolute harmony and a calm and peaceful atmosphere of service and brotherly love.

Q. 282. Maharaj Ji, along the line of what you were just talking about a while ago, about satsang meetings—is it acceptable to you to have some of us invite the groups to come to our homes now and then?

A. I cannot fix any set rule as to how you conduct your meetings or where you conduct your meetings. If there is affection and harmony amongst the group, it does not make any difference even if you sit on the roadside and conduct your meeting. It is the love, faith and the devotion that matter; the place does not matter. It hardly makes any difference whether it is in your home or in a hall, or in some other place. When such questions arise it indicates that there is no unity at all. You can meet anywhere, but it should be in the right spirit, keeping the purpose of the meeting in view. In that case the heart feels happy in love and devotion, and that meeting, regardless of where it is held, is useful, even if it is held by the roadside somewhere. The place really makes no difference, as we have to create our own atmosphere of love and devotion. When others see that we are actually living up to the teachings and are happy and harmonious as a group, they will also feel attracted to the teachings. That is the best publicity.

Q. 283. Along the same line, what about food at the meetings?

A. That again depends entirely on the group. I do not lay down any particular rules for the conduct of group meetings. Whatever brings you together, whatever creates harmony and love among you, adopt it. I can just lay down the principles, what should be the basis or the essence of group meetings. But I cannot advise you to do this way or that way, for then again you will be rigid and a slave of all that.

Q. 284. Master, when one has been initiated and has broken all the vows by the wayside, to the extent of giving up the diet and so forth, to what extent should the association of satsangis with that person be changed? Or should it be changed? Should they eat with him?

A. I have already covered that point in another answer, that still he is better than a non-initiate. When we meet with all other types of people, in all sorts of atmosphere, who know nothing about Sant Mat and spirituality or even about God, we never hesitate to mix with them. Then why should we hesitate to mix with one who has strayed from the Path, but still feels that the Path is right? He is a victim of his own weaknesses, and cannot help that. He is to be pitied and helped. Rather, we should give him more love and consideration, to bring him back to the Path, instead of boycotting him. It is not the right attitude not to mix with or help such people. We should have no hatred toward anybody. Our hearts should be receptive—open to everyone who wants to come into the Fold.

Q. Master, I did not mean it like that. I mean should we ever say anything to him about it? Or should we take the position that we are ignoring him?

A. It may depend upon your human relation with him. If you think he will take advice from you, likes help and wants certain moral strength, you should not hesitate to give it to him. If you think he would resent it, he would like to avoid it, then why fuss over it? We should definitely try to help each other. What are the objects of these meetings? What is the object of satsangis meeting together? It is to get help to keep straight, to remain on the Path. In Satsang, which really means True Meeting, True Association, we get so much moral strength, moral support from each other to remain in the realm of Sant Mat. So the true teachings expressed in love and harmony are paramount qualities, and should always be given and open to everybody. But if anybody resents that, do not bother about it nor be hurt about it, but go on doing your duty lovingly and devotedly, leaving him to his own fate. We should never try to force any advice on anyone, even with the best of intentions. Example is better than precept, and such a person will eventually reform when those bad karmas are finished, or when he lives up to the teachings and is helped over them by the grace of the Master.

Q. 285. Is there anything wrong with discussing?

A. No. That is what I say.

Q. Even to the point of arguing?

A. No. There is no harm, but it must be constructive and in an endeavor to understand certain things; and not to hurt any body or for the purpose of asserting your point. The purpose should be to understand or to feel convinced or get convinced, or

to convince the other person. It is not a case of arguing about opinions but of stating facts, and should be done with a view to help each other. Meetings should be helpful and, especially the old initiates who understand Sant Mat should help the new seekers or new initiates. Naturally, they have so many hurdles to cross, they have so many things to understand, so they should be encouraged to understand through these personal discussions, Sant Mat discussions.

Another thing, if you hold group meetings, you keep in touch with the Center at Beas. We send you news and writings on different spiritual subjects, which you can read and discuss. Your collective problems that you cannot solve locally may also be sent to us, and we shall reply to you as a group instead of individually. So these group meetings are helpful, especially to the new seekers, but only if there is absolute harmony and love there. This should be so much in evidence that if a person comes from the outside, he should feel that harmony and love, and that there is something different in the group, something other than merely going and sitting, chatting, expressing opinions, eating and coming back home.

Q. 286. Should any special effort be made to attract people or should this be flowing into the group all by itself?

A. No. We should not worry about advertisements or publicity, but the real seekers we should try to help, and we know that there are real seekers. We send so many complimentary books from the Dera, complimentary small pamphlets which you can give to the real seekers for reading. If they are interested, they will naturally ask you more questions and will attend your meetings. You can suggest to them what

books to read, help them to get those books; but if one is not a seeker and he does not want to understand it, do not bother about it. However, we should really help those who are honest and sincere in their search for God-Realization.

Q. 287. When a friend is interested in the teachings of the Masters, which Radha Soami book should we give him first?

A. Any book you like most. Every book expresses the same Truth in a slightly different manner, according to various backgrounds; so some people prefer one book, and some another, and so on. You can suggest the abridged *Path of the Masters* to begin with, if you like. There are so many other books now from the Western point of view, such as *Yoga and the Bible* by Leeming, and so many other pamphlets which can explain the teachings to a real seeker. If the person is interested, he will make a further probe. If he is not interested, you should forget about it.

Q. 288. Maharaj Ji, is it advisable to have a short period of meditation during the meetings?

A. Well, if you feel it is necessary in order to create a calm atmosphere, then perhaps ten or fifteen minutes meditation will help. If everyone of you is willing and wishes to create that atmosphere, then there is no harm. But group meditation should not be for a long period and should not be at the cost of our daily meditation. When sitting with a group, we are generally conscious of everybody sitting around us and our mind cannot concentrate. When you are sitting alone it is not so difficult to forget the whole world, but when sitting with other people and you have not so much developed yourself, it is not so easy to become

unconscious of those sitting around you and you do not concentrate properly. But there is no harm in praying to Him or meditating for ten or fifteen minutes to get that atmosphere of love, harmony and devotion, and forget our differences by means of meditation. It is good. There is no harm in it.

Q. 289. Is it quite all right to talk about personal, little personal things, before we really begin a meeting. To chat about personal things, that does not do any harm, does it? It does not draw one down?

A. No. It does not draw you down at all. The human mind is such that we want expression. Probably this is the right place to express what we are suppressing inside, especially in such a country as this, where people are so self-centered, always confined to their own houses. But we should not forget the purpose of the meeting, and the spirit of harmony and love should always prevail. That is the main thing.

Q. 290. On the subject of health, we have had disagreements at our meetings where most of our members say that we should read only from Radha Soami books. But these books tell us nothing about our health. In order to serve the purpose of a certain cause, we have to be healthy. So, I have said many times to our President that we should have readings on that subject—how to breathe, how to exercise—and we can learn a lot and improve our health.

A. Brother, there are so many schools that will tell you how to breathe and how to exercise and how to keep healthy. You have so many sports clubs and other organizations, and from these you can learn all those things about health. But spirituality is something different. We, of course, need health for the purpose of spirituality, but in this school (of

spirituality) how many things can be taught? There is, so to say, a specialization on all subjects. Here we are only concerned with spirituality. Naturally, a healthy body is a great aid on the path to spirituality. You can keep your body healthy by doing yogic exercises, by running, by walking, and by so many different kinds of exercises.

Q. Master, I want to know if we are allowed to hold lectures on the subject of health—whether it is not against the theory or teachings of Sant Mat?

A. No. The teachings of Sant Mat do not tell us not to keep or preserve good health. You can lecture, if need be, on how to preserve health; but these things are very unnecessary, elementary things in such meetings. One can learn from books, or one can go to other places to know how to preserve or keep good health. For example, these yogic exercises—all of them tell you how to preserve health. But why waste time in discussing these things in the group meetings? We should only talk about spirituality. Other people already know about these things or they can always learn from books or going to some other such teachers or organizations. The main purpose of health is that we should be able to devote our time to meditation. These yogic exercises were just a means to keep healthy. They were not the meditation itself, but simply the means for meditation. Sometimes we confuse these things. We take these yogic exercises as meditation by itself, and that is wrong.

A healthy body is required for meditation, but health alone is not sufficient for meditation. We need so many other things besides health. Proper practice of meditation is what we need. It is good to

be healthy, and there are so many exercises which help you. And then exercises differ with different individuals. One exercise which I do for preserving my health may not suit another person who may be a heart patient.

Q. Well, Master, my point was that though there are quite a few societies, but the average person does not know, is not enlightened enough to go there. We should hold lectures, let us say, at our satsang every week or so on that subject. They do quite a bit of good and give you so much information which I, myself, learned and I can assure you that my health is due mostly to that. And I do not see why everybody else cannot do that?

A. That is right. You can just suggest that in these meetings, and you can refer others to these books. We have no objection to that. But, our purpose of group meetings is not so much to discuss about health as it is to stress spirituality. Otherwise, we may deviate from the real subject—that is what I fear. For instance, if we start telling how to cook good food, or how satsangis should dress, and we start giving demonstrations of all that—well, we are lost. Where is the time for all this, and where will there be an end to all these things?

Q. I do not mean all the time, only occasionally, once in a while?

A. I have no objection. You may discuss anything from the health point of view. Or, you can say that these exercises have helped you, these books have helped you. Then if anybody else is interested, he can join those organizations, or he can read those books from the health point of view. You people meet just once a month, or once a week, and just for about an hour or so. In this little time, how can you discuss all these multipurpose activities of our daily

needs? It is always good to discuss spirituality, because the purpose of the group meeting is to build that atmosphere in which we have to live for meditation. We should not do anything which deviates our attention from that meditation. We have to build that atmosphere of meditation around us by reading Sant Mat literature, by giving help to each other. We should always be helpful to each other. We should try to create in ourselves love and devotion for the Lord, and help the new students on the Path so that they too can live in that atmosphere of meditation. That is the object of these group meetings—nothing else. But, if there is disharmony, unpleasantness, or bossing in the group meetings, I do not think that you practically gain anything from such group meetings at all.

Another point to consider is that other people may not feel inclined to hear about health or cooking, or other things. They may say that all these other things can be learned in other schools, but what they cannot learn in other schools is about meditation, about spirituality; and that is the purpose for which they come here. We are not against talking about health, or how to breathe, or how to exercise; but there are so many other places where we can learn these things.

If anybody needs help, whether spiritual, mental or physical, and we are able to help, we should always do so. But what I mean is that we should not be lost in so many activities that we forget the real purpose of these meetings. The real purpose is to create love and devotion, because a healthy, good atmosphere of love and devotion is very essential for meditation. There should always be love and harmony in your

groups. You should be helpful to each other, and a new seeker coming and entering in your hall should automatically realize the difference between other organizations and your organization. You can help them in health and in cooking matters too. I have seen your magazines. They publish all those recipes for cooking and all that. These are useful for practical purposes, but we need not waste time in discussing these things in our meetings.

Q. But people have to be informed. Of course, they are not ignorant, but they are misguided. They are not informed about health, and neither was I many years ago.

A. I mean, if the impression in satsang is that we have to ignore health, that is wrong. We have to look after our health, but the purpose of keeping healthy is meditation. The object should be kept in view; that object should not be lost; that destination we should not forget. Health we have to maintain. Everybody needs health. But, we cannot teach all these things. We should discuss only the spirituality, which is the food for the soul and the mind. Other things automatically come to us when the love of the Lord and devotion comes in us. We should not lose time in those discussions; those other things we can always learn elsewhere.

Q. 291. Should one rotate the meeting from one home to another, or should one just keep them where it is most practical, where there are no little children to bother?

A. This depends upon your own environment. If people feel that they do not want to come to a particular house, always, well, they can shift to some other house. You should try also to oblige the other

person who wants you to hold some meetings at his own place. These are all small things that can be decided mutually. When you will be happy to oblige anybody, they will be happy to oblige you, always, because everyone wants to live in that environment, in that atmosphere of harmony and peace.

11. DIET — VEGETARIAN, TEETOTALER

Q. 292. I would like to know why, if a person practices the commandments and does good to every one regardless of whether they be good or bad, why is it that he has to abstain from meat?

A. Sister, I will explain to you. All that you see in the world can be divided into five divisions or categories, based on the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. The human body is made up of all five elements, but the soul, the Essence of the Lord, gives it life. Because it is only the human body that contains all five elements, it is called the top of creation.

The first division is that of the plant kingdom, the main or active element of which is water. The second is that of insects, reptiles and worms which live under the ground.[1] They have most active in them the elements of earth and fire. Fowl, including all types of birds, belong to the third class, and the three elements most active in them are water, fire and air. Those belonging to the fourth category are the four-legged animals, such as cows, buffalos, horses, and the like. They lack only ether, the power of discretion. Human beings are in the fifth class, at the very top of creation, as all the five elements are active in them.

One's feeling is in proportion to the number of elements that are active and the degree to which they are active. For example, if you pluck a flower from the garden of your neighbor, there will be no punishment. She will only abuse you or frown at you, or you will just incur her displeasure. If you kill her chicken, she may file a suit and you may be fined; if you kill a horse, you may be imprisoned; and if you kill a human being you may be hanged or receive some

1. Fire and air predominate in insects above the ground.

other form of capital punishment. However, in this world, we can never live on the dead; the living can live only on the living. We cannot live by eating stones, nor can we live just by drinking water or by breathing air. Life has to live on life. So the saints advise us to collect the least amount of karma while living in this world, and for that reason they advise us to live on fruits and vegetables. They belong to the first division, and even they have souls; but the karma involved by eating them is not as great as that which we would incur by living on or in any way destroying the life contained in those belonging to the other categories.

Yet it is impossible to live in this world without some so-called innocent killing; as, for instance, when we walk we kill insects; when we talk we kill insects; when we breathe we kill insects, though they are not visible to the naked eye. This whole room is filled with creatures; we are killing these creatures without even realizing it. We are killing by talking, by breathing and even when shaking hands. Whatever we are doing, we are killing. The room is full of souls.

If you are given a hundred and eighty pounds of weight to carry, you will be crushed under it and will not be able to go even a step. So saints always advise us to collect the least amount of karma. That means that because we have to live and we can live only on the living, they advise us to collect the least possible load. That is why we depend upon plant life, which is a very insignificant amount of karma to collect and which can be cleared with even one or two days' meditation.

If on the one hand we are meditating, and on the other hand we are killing every day, we are only

balancing what we are doing and we are back where we started. How to get rid of the load we are carrying? We are advised not to collect anything for the future, and whatever we have already collected, to clear it with meditation. Then only we can go back to the Lord. That is why we are vegetarian.

Q. 293. Master, do you advise a vegetarian diet?

A. There is no question of whether or not I advise it. We must follow it. There is no other way for spiritual progress. If you have only a shirt on your back, you can run; but if you are given a tremendous load, you cannot even take a step. As life must live on life in this world, the saints say that we should limit our intake to things containing one element, and that means vegetation, the plant kingdom. We should try to take the least burden from this world, just like wearing a light shirt, which does not bother you, as you do not feel that load. We should not accumulate so much bad karma, such as by killing, by eating meat, that we are just crushed under it and cannot make any spiritual progress.

If we kill, we will be killed. We should never forget that. Christ said, "Love thy neighbor". All creatures are our neighbors. The surroundings in which we are living, that is, the whole universe is our neighbor. When you love anybody, you do not kill that individual; and when we love the whole creation, we cannot kill intentionally nor could we find it in our heart to have it done for us by someone else.

Q. 294. But why can we not eat an infertile egg? We are not killing?

A. I know that infertile eggs have no life, and from

that standpoint you can justify it. But when you start with that, you start with the other also. You get the taste of that and there will be no end to it. If you just start innocently with a kiss, you do not know where you will end; so then you start justifying things. It is better to be strict, and when we are strict about a certain thing, there is no question of compromising. We remain strict, but if we become just a little loose in this way or that way, we do not know where it leads to. Besides, the eating of even an infertile egg, hardens the mind by exciting animal instincts, which are antagonistic to spiritual progress.

Q. 295. Master, if an initiate should stray from the vegetarian diet after two or three years after Initiation, what would be the effect on the initiate?

A. I think you have given quite a latitude—two or three years. You are perhaps referring to your wife, who was initiated today? (Laughter).

Q. No, no! I am interested in all of us.

A. Then why worry at all? Why should an initiate at all stray from the vegetarian diet? Why worry about this question? If a child commits a mistake, even a little crime, the father does not hand him over to the police. But the father never hesitates to spank him, to beat him or to punish him in some way in order to set him right, to reform him; but he will never hand him over to the police or to the jail authorities. So, if we fall, we do not go back but we have to pay for that. We are given punishment just for our reformation. A mother loves the child most, but still she has to keep him right. Sometimes she has to spank him—not because she hates him, but

because she loves him and wants to keep him disciplined, to set him right. So, in the same way, the Master also admonished us, and we have to face the consequences of what we do; but he does it with a loving hand and with loving care, just for our own advantage.

Q. 296. Master, what is the responsibility of a satsangi when he has a guest, either in his home or in a public eating place, for providing for that guest? Supposing that the guest wants meat?

A. Brother, you do what is possible under the circumstances. You see, sometimes we are caught up in such situations, and we find it practically impossible to escape. We do it, but we are not happy that we are doing it. Then we try to avoid or escape from such situations where we are not happy about what we have to do. When we ourselves do not eat or drink what is harmful to spiritual progress, there is no reason why we should serve it to others. If we are doing it, perhaps we are not happy within ourselves. If you are not happy within yourself that you are doing it, a time will come when you will refuse to live against yourself; you will refuse to do it; you would like to avoid it.

Q. It is better then that we should not want to do that?

A. If you feel guilty about doing it, then you should not do it. If you honestly feel that it is all right under the circumstances, I do not bother, I do not mind, go on doing it. You should not do anything that makes you carry a sense of guilt with you, for that will not let you sit in meditation, it will not let you live with yourself, and it will not let you be happy. We should always do the best we can under the circum-

stances. Sometimes we are caught in such a net that we find it difficult to escape. We just have to do what is practically possible in that situation. We do many things which we cannot justify, which we should not justify, but we have to do them. But the law of karma, all the same will take its own course.

Q. Maharaj Ji, when a satsangi is having friends at home and his particular friend delights in eating meats and things other than fruit and vegetables, should a satsangi serve meats to his friends—when he has to invite them to his home?

A. Brother, it depends on the situation. If he has to do it, let him do it. But the main thing is that we are not to take it ourselves. And I tell you, when we do not take it ourselves, we are never happy to do all these things. What is the use of serving anybody meat or drink, if you carry that sense of guilt always with you of what you have done? Then you do not live with yourself. You are torturing yourself. You are unhappy with yourself, and gradually, perhaps you yourself begin to take it. You will not be happy in such circumstances. You will not be happy in that atmosphere or company.

Q. Then it is best that you let them know that in your home none of these things are served?

A. I tell you, it is much better to be strong within yourself. There is no need to feel inferior in this society that we are vegetarian and do not drink, also that we do not serve such things. If people do not really love you, you have no concern with them. Do not bother about them. If they are interested in you, they will respect your principles. They will respect your feelings. And if you think they are not

interested in you to that extent, I do not think they are even worth meeting.

Q. 297. If somebody serves meat to his children or to other people or to friends, or liquor to other people, is this a demerit to him, or to the people who eat or who drink?

A. It is a vicious circle. It is bad for both. You see, in any way, what its spiritual effect is. When you yourself do not eat meat and do not drink, you yourself are never happy to serve these things. As a result you always carry a feeling of guilt in you, and that in itself becomes a block in your progress. You are not happy with yourself; you are never happy in such situations and, naturally, when your mind is always feeling like that, you will never concentrate, you will never make progress as long as you are carrying that feeling of guilt with you. So why not just throw it away by discontinuing to do those things that make you feel like that?

Q. 298. Now, taking the reverse situation, when people invite you to their homes and they eat meat and, of course, the satsangi does not eat meat, what is the situation in regard to him when he gets the odor of meat right under his nose?

A. We have to live in this world. We cannot convert the whole world to our own view, to our own way of thinking. You have to make the best use of the situation to the extent that you should not take it yourself. You do not bother about what they do. You are to be strict only with yourself. You are responsible for yourself, you are not responsible for the world. You cannot solve the problems of the world, but you can rise above those problems and not let them affect you. You are only

concerned with your own food. Let them do whatever they want to do.

Q. 299. How should one answer a friend who says that I know that eating meat is wrong; however, more bad karma is made by hurting the feelings of host or hostess than by eating meat.

A. You can just pity him, that is all. I assure you that when we stand on Sant Mat principles, we are not hurting others, not even a little bit, for our principles. Actually, when our beloveds and our friends know our principles, if they are interested in us, they respect our principles. If they are not interested in us, I do not think we should bother about them at all. We should not compromise with our principles. Our real friends will always appreciate and respect our principles, because they love us and they always like to do what pleases us. Otherwise, if they are selfish, you can easily be indifferent to them.

Q. 300. Master, what is the simplest way to explain to one's children the reason for not eating meat?

A. I think the simplest way is just to set ourselves up as an example to our children. They do not want any reasoning when they see that the parents do not eat meat. Generally, they try to do what the parents do, and we can explain to them from the humane point of view that it is not kind but it is cruel to kill anybody. I know of a particular example: When my sister was newly married, her husband used to take meat. Though, of course, she was an initiate and did not eat it, yet she did not like to interfere in his life, and when she got a child, her husband tried to rear the child according to his own views. My sister,

of course, never liked that; so one day when her husband was out, the servants were going to kill a chicken, and she took her son right to the spot. Naturally, the chicken was crying out and resisting, and the child just could not stand it. After that he automatically became a vegetarian in spite of his father's persuasions, and ultimately the father also became an initiate.

Children do not know what they are eating, but if they know how these chickens and animals are being killed and slain, and what they have to go through, probably the children would never eat meat. Their heart is so sensitive and tender that they cannot stand it. So I think it is more or less for the parents to explain to them, or to be an example to them, but not to insist too much, especially in this modern generation. You see, they do not want any decisions; they like to think that it is their own decision; but we have to prepare them for such good decisions.

Q. 301. A friend of mine has a little grandchild of three and that grandchild has never been told that they are vegetarian, but he will not eat meat and he tells his grandmother it is not right to eat meat. Is that a memory?

A. This is due to associations with a past life. We call them 'sanskaras', impressions of a past life. Sometimes they come along with us into this world and we automatically have such an abhorrence to these things that we cannot do it in spite of our best efforts.

Q. 302. What can I do about my children who prefer to have meat in their diet on occasions? I would rather not have it in my home.

A. Well, sister, this is naturally a problem. You,

and not your children, have taken a decision to follow a path. So, as far as you are concerned, you should never compromise with your principles. You have to be strict with your principles. As the duty of a mother to her children, if they want it, I would advise you not to shirk your duty to serve them; but if you can explain to them, if you can advise them and you can put them on the vegetarian diet, perhaps you will be happy and they will be happy. If you cannot do it, you should not worry about it at all. But you should never compromise with your own principles.

Q. 303. Master, I have two very small children, and it does not concern my husband or myself to give up meat. But when people hear that we are not giving meat to our young children, in our society, we are made to feel a little that we are depriving them of nutrition. A few words from you would put our minds at ease. For a young child, is a vegetarian diet sufficient?

A. Well, sister, you can bring up your children in any way you like. Many people who have never tasted meat in their life are in better health than those who have taken it. It is the responsibility of the parents as to what they want to give to the child. The child himself has to make his own decisions when he becomes mature. Then you leave it to him what he wants to do. As far as Sant Mat is concerned, we are only concerned with the initiates. They are not to compromise with the diet; but with others we are not concerned at all.

Q. 304. But if I were thinking of Initiation at some time, would it be better for me to keep my children vegetarian?

A. No, you have only to pledge for yourself. You have no right to pledge for anybody else. What you

do not do for yourself you will always hate to do for others. It is for the parents to decide what is best for the children until they are mature. Then they can decide for themselves what they want and what they do not want. We are only concerned with the seekers, with the initiates. The initiate has to take a pledge to be vegetarian.

Q. 305. If you bring somebody into this world and you are on the Path, and you do not feed him according to the Path, who suffers the karma, you or the child?

A. If you do not put the children on a vegetarian diet, then it may be due to the karmas of both of you. The child and you, yourself, are both responsible for it. But it is his karma. If it is not in his karma, he will never eat meat, even from birth. If he is destined not to eat meat, he will be born only in that family where no meat is served. For example, I have never tasted meat or eggs in my life, and my father never tasted meat or egg. Luckily we were born in that family. We could not do anything about it if we were born in America. So the karma is there. That becomes destiny. That karma brings us automatically where we are to face that particular type of karma. When one's time comes, he will automatically shed all fears and will be on the Path with the vegetarian diet.

Q. 306. Master, you said that we should not have alcohol. Does this mean that if we were sick and the doctor gaves us some medicine containing narcotic, does it do the same thing?

A. If from the health point of view a doctor sometimes recommends it, take it; but one should not be addicted to it. It should not become a habit. Some people

take narcotics and all that, thinking that by doing so they keep up their strength, or morale. That is not right.

Q. 307. Maharaj Ji, I think some of us are worrying about eating sugar, because we understand that bone products are used in processing the sugar?

A. I think you are trying to analyze too much. If you try to do that, I wonder if you will even be drinking water! I wonder if you would even like to breathe if you knew what you were breathing in. It is the human habit to do too much hair-splitting, and when you go on analyzing too much you will find that it leads nowhere. We have to live in this world. We need food, we need shoes on our feet and we need clothes. If we try to analyze everything, perhaps we would not like to live. That is why Saints always advise us that this world is not a place for us to call it our home at all. Why not leave it and go back to Him? That is the reason why all our efforts should be to go back to Him. Personally, I am not against taking sugar. I do not take it, not because I have anything against sugar, but because I am a little diabetic. Otherwise, there is no harm in taking sugar at all, as far as Sant Mat is concerned.

12. CREATION—THE WHY OF CREATION

Q. 308. Are we drops pushed out of the ocean or do we come out of the ocean of the Lord by our own volition?

A. Brother, it is a very deep question and a good question, and naturally everybody thinks about it. Everybody worries about why we are here, what is the purpose of our being here. And the only answer is that we have to seek God and to know from Him why we are here. Then, perhaps, when you know Him you will not bother to know why you were sent here, into this world. So, instead of putting our thoughts into such investigations, we should just make a practical approach to try to meet Him so that we can inquire from Him why He sent us into this world. Not that it cannot be explained, but it is very difficult, if not impossible, to understand with the intellect.

Supposing a child of four asks his mother how he was born. She will try to put him off with one story or another—I found you in a basket—I found you in a flower—and she just smiles and goes away. Not that she does not know the answer, but she will always prefer the child to grow up to that age to be able to understand the answer to how he has come. Similarly, we have to go there, we have to spiritually grow up to that level to know why He created this world. Now our only concern, the main question, is how to get rid of this world and go back to Him. And when we go back to Him, I tell you, we will not bother to know why He created us.

It is explained in the Bible:—

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were

made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Everything is His projection. It is all His Play.

Q. 309. I do not know who said it, but the words keep coming to me, "The play is the thing"...?

A. Many Saints in the East, many Mystics have said that this is the play of the Lord; that is all. That is the only reference they have given, that what we see is nothing but a play of the Lord.

Q. 310. The first question referred to the Supreme Lord as sending us down here. Now sometimes in the Radha Soami literature, or it may be in some of the discussions, I forget which, we have been referred to as being prodigal sons, which indicates that we came down here by our own choice, rather than being sent down by the Supreme Lord. Will you comment on that?

A. How could we have a choice, when we were with the Lord? Choice comes through the mind, and there is no mind there. We have been sent. We have been given mind, to be pulled to and function in this world. But we had no mind there. The question of our choice did not arise there. If the universe had to be created, some souls had to be sent, whether they liked it or not. It is not advisable to discuss many things. For example, you may have heard or you may have read—but I do not want to give much importance to it—that some souls were quite willing to come, and others were quite reluctant to come. Generally, it is said that saints come for those souls who were reluctant to come into this world, and that is considered to be one-tenth of the number of souls sent here. So, only one-tenth will make their way

back to the Lord and nine-tenths will stay back here to carry on the universe. That is why everybody will not be attracted towards the Lord. Some souls are required for the universe to go on, unless the Lord wants to finish this whole play. Otherwise, if all the souls were to go back to Him, there would be an end to this universe. So the Saints come for those marked souls. The one-tenth are the marked souls for which the Masters come, to take them back to the Lord. They are known as the marked souls. I did not want to discuss this question.

Q. 311. In line with your comments, before, in regard to this question which repeatedly comes up, if I understand you correctly, there are many things we cannot possibly understand here, because there are so many things different in the higher planes, the higher levels, that do not resemble anything that we have here, that it would be impossible for us to understand it?

A. That is also right, and mostly there are many things that Saints just do not like to explain even, because we would have to take it on faith and nothing else. Even if they told us, we could not grasp it, and it would only confuse us. These things have to be experienced inside.

Q. 312. The important thing is to do meditation and go back?

A. That is right. But since we have intellect, we have got to satisfy it.

Q. 313. Where does that first desire come from out of the ocean, to come down here?

A. That is the same old question, asked so many times. In order to know the answer, we will have to know the Lord and why He has created this whole universe. We have got to make our way up to know

Him, to know why He created it. Then, when we reach there, perhaps we will not try to know why He created it.

Q. 314. The question I am going to ask is very difficult to ask and very difficult to answer by anyone, except perhaps by the Master. (The Master jokingly said: "It must have taken you a long time to write it. You can read it from the paper".) This question has been asked many times before but without an adequate and authoritative answer. The question is: Why really did we leave our Home in Sat Desh? Did our souls have some imperfection that made it necessary for the Supreme Father to send us out to lower regions? Were we unconscious or conscious? And did we want to leave the Father's House?

A. I think I have discussed this question many times in the meetings. In other words, you want to know why the Lord has created this universe? Why we are here? If we know why we are here, we will know the Lord. To know why he has created this world any why we are away from Him, we have got to know Him. And when we know Him, perhaps we will not bother to ask Him why He has created us. Now we can explain things only with the limited knowledge of the intellect, but that will also be through the mind. The mind can neither explain nor understand why this whole universe has been created. He knows best why He has created it, because in the beginning nothing existed besides Him. If anybody else had existed besides Him then the other being would have known why He created it. Only He is the beginning, and He is the end. He always was, is now and always will be. Everything that we see is His projection.

The question of imperfect souls there does not arise. Nobody is imperfect in the realms of the Lord. Everybody is perfect there, because He is the Lord

Himself. There, nothing exists besides the Lord, so the question of imperfect souls there, having been sent here, does not arise at all. In order to know why He has created the universe, we should make our way up to reach Him. That is the only way to get the proper answer to our question. With our limited knowledge we may go on trying to analyze, but by mathematics or by scientific means, we can never reach any decision at all. That is why we are working day and night in meditation—to know why He has created this universe. Even if the saints explained why He has created it, we would not understand it. We would have to take it on faith. We have nothing to put a test to; nothing which can be used for proof or comparison. So why just flirt with our mind and our own intellect, wondering why we are away from the Lord? We should take a practical view and try to make our way up to merge back into the Lord. Instead of trying to analyze why we are here, let us try to return to Him. And then we will know why He created us also.

Q. 315. Why are we imperfect?

A. If we were not imperfect, this world would not exist today, we all would have returned to Him. Because the Lord wants this world to go on, He wants this creation, so imperfection is bound to be here. This world is the region of the *combination* of good and bad.

Q. If our spirit is perfect, then where we descended from was perfect?

A. Yes.

Q. But we are imperfect?

A. Yes, we are imperfect because we are under the sway of the mind, and the mind is under the sway of the senses. So we are imperfect. When He would like us to be perfect, we will become perfect, and we will go back and merge into Him.

Q. 316. Maharaj Ji, you say that all this creation is done by God. Sometimes this thing bothers me that there is nothing to explain who created God?

A. If we try to find out who created God, we will have to find out who created that which created that which created God, and there will be no end to all that... There was and is nothing beyond God, and God created everything. That is what is written in all the books also. No one has yet been able to find something beyond God. He is His own Creator. He is everything.

Q. 317. Why do we want to go back and merge into Him?

A. It is very clear that unless we merge back into Him we will never get release from this worldly bondage. Nobody is truly happy in this world. With all the achievements to our credit, we are not happy. There is something in us which is always disturbing us; something within us which always makes us feel that we are lonely in this world. We feel that we are missing something, and that which makes us feel that we are missing something is nothing but a natural inclination of the soul towards its Lord. Unless it merges back into Him, we can never stop that feeling of missing something.

A drop, by merging into an ocean, becomes an ocean. So we are a drop of that ocean. Unless we merge back into the ocean, we can never escape from

birth and death. We can never escape from this world. This world is filled with misery, agony, howsoever much a paradise we try to make it. I do not think we have become mentally happier than before. Despite so many worldly achievements to our credit, I do not think we have made this world a paradise. We are more unhappy than before, I would say; more unhappy than those whom we call the uncivilized people. They got much better and sounder sleep than we do. They had much better health than we possess today. They had a much longer life-span than we have today, and they were a much happier lot than we are today. So I do not think we have improved this world in any way, from the happiness point of view. Every day we are becoming more and more unhappy. The more we run out to achieve happiness, the more frustrated and unhappy, we are becoming. So I think our pursuit is in the wrong direction. If we just pursue that happiness within ourselves, we can become happy. And unless we find that happiness within ourselves, life is not worth living. The true and lasting happiness we can find only when the soul merges back into the Lord, merges back into that ocean. Just to find that happiness, we want to go back and merge into Him.

Some Saints explain the relationship of the soul with the Lord as that of the son with the father. In the relationship, the son is absolutely carefree. The Lord is also referred to in the Bible as the one God and Father of all. Some saints have explained this relationship of the Lord with the soul as that of a wife and husband. The wife is happy only when she is in the company of her husband, when she is with her husband. Whatever you may give her, even all

the comforts of the world, but if separated from her husband, she can never be happy. So some Saints explain the relationship of the soul with the Lord as that of a wife and a husband. Many Saints have explained this very relationship as that of a son and a mother. For example, Rama Krishna, and Vedantic Saints say the relationship of the Lord with the soul is that of a mother to a son, for when a son submits himself to his mother, he is carefree, he is happy, he has a sense of security. He does not bother about anything in the world.

Unless the soul merges back into the Lord, we can never have that sense of security or of happiness. We can never get release from birth and death. And as long as we are separated from Him, we are in this world, we are very unhappy and miserable. Our lot is despicable. That is why we search for Him. That is why He is our objective; He is our destination. And this human form, as you have just heard, is bestowed upon us, is given to us for that very purpose. That is the only duty of the human form, because only in the human body can we travel on that Path to reach our destination, to achieve our goal. In other forms we can never do that. That is why the human form is known as the top of the creation, the temple of the Living God.

We have got to find that Living God within the body, as this is His temple. We have to make a search within this temple. He has made this temple Himself, He resides in it Himself, and we have got to make our research of the Lord within this temple. We can be happy only when the purpose of our coming into this body has been achieved. And the purpose

of our coming into this body can be achieved only when we invert our attention within this body and try to make a research for Him there. Unless we meet Him we can never be happy and we can never be saved from birth and death.

It is difficult to know why He created this world, but it is very clear to us that we are separated from Him and we have got to make our way up in order to reach Him. Then, when we reach Him, we will know the reason for this creation too. It can be explained, but you would understand it only with the intellect, which cannot comprehend it, and so would lead you nowhere. We have to go beyond the mind and intellect, reach the state of direct perception by the soul, and then "experience" will explain everything.

12. (i) SOUL—PEACE

Q. 318. Maharaj Ji, will you kindly say a few words about what the soul is? I understand that the highest thing is consciousness. Is that right?

A. That is right. Soul is consciousness. As the soul goes up, it becomes the highest state of consciousness. It restults in the highest stages of consciousness.

Q. It is a drop of the Supreme Creator?

A. That is right.

Q. 319. Maharaj Ji, is the Lord creating new souls all the time, or is He using the older ones?

A. I think He has sufficient old ones. (Laughter) So there is hardly any necessity to create new ones.

Q. 320. We read a story about someone who died drastically. It seems there is pain there?

A. You mean there is pain in hell? Why not? Do you want to make hell a paradise?

Q. 321. Did you say there was no physical pain in the astral?

A. There are many sides to the astral region. Just now I am referring to the hell side.

Q. 322. Speaking of souls, is there any essential difference in the soul, of say a person who is very bad and one who is very good? Is that not just the action of their mind, and there would not be any difference in the souls as such, would there?

A. Brother, a diamond is a diamond. If you throw it in the mud it will be encrusted with mud, but the moment it is washed it is again as brilliant as before. The soul is a diamond. Every soul is of the essence of the Lord. It is pure in itself, but having taken the company of the mind and the mind having become

victim of the senses, it has covered itself with evil, darkness, filth. So when it leaves the mind, every soul is the same. There is no difference in their purity. Some souls fall into very dirty mud; some fall on a little cleaner ground; some have only little specks and stains stuck to them; and some are completely wrapped in filth, so more drastic measures have to be taken to cleanse them. But a diamond is a diamond.

Q. 323. In the discourse, why did you refer to the soul as 'she'?

A. We have to write or say something; but soul is soul; neither is it 'he' nor 'she'. The soul in a lady is referred to as 'she' in this world, and the soul in a man as 'he' . Actually, the soul has no sex.

Q. That is my understanding.

A. You are right. When we go beyond Trikuti, beyond the second stage, when we unknot the knot of the soul and mind, there is no sex at all. What can one say? One has to call it something. This language is too inadequate to explain all these spiritual things, I would say. I might add that this discourse is a translation. In the original, the soul is referred to as 'she' for no particular reason.

Q. I would expect a little bit more.

A. Well, you let me know what word to use that would be more practical. (Laughter)

Q. 324. Maharaj Ji, I heard that a satsangi lady cannot get past the third region. In other words, the rumor was that even if she were initiated and were to get up to that stage, she still would have to come down and be reborn into the form of man to enable her to reach Sach Khand?

A. It is not pleasant to think that? (Laughter)

You see, it is a man's world. (Laughter) Men always like to feel superior by saying these things, and I more or less think that this originated as "Guest house gossip" in the Dera. I have not read it in any spiritual literature. As far as Sant Mat is concerned there is no difference between a man and a woman. There is absolutely no difference. Sex plays no part there. After Trikuti, the second stage, sex does not even exist at all. The soul itself has no sex; that is left behind with the body, with the mind. So it is absolutely wrong to think that because one is a woman, one cannot go back to the Lord without coming back into this world as a man; or to think that only man is so fortunate as to be entitled to go back to Him. That is not so. But sometimes a man probably wants to escape from a lady, so he thinks up that happy situation, that at least there will not be any ladies that high up. (Laughter) As far as Sant Mat is concerned, that is absolutely wrong.

The soul has no soul-mate and the soul has no sex. Some people are under the delusion, probably another justification for their own weaknesses, that unless we meet our soul-mate we cannot go back to Him. I often get letters from American satsangis saying, "I cannot make progress because I have not yet been able to meet my soul-mate". This is just another justification for weakness. The soul does not need nor can it have a soul-mate at all. Every soul is individual. We have our individual relation with the Lord. We do not need to get somebody. Our Master is our soul-mate, if you want to call him such, as it is only through him that we can go back and merge into the Lord. Soul has absolutely no sex, sex is not involved at all; in fact, we have to rise above

it and sublimate it in order to make even a little spiritual progress. So ladies should not feel at all inferior from that point of view.

Q. 325. Will you tell us the definition Sant Mat has for us about soulmates? Whether it is in marriage or without marriage, and how we will recognize it?

A. As I have mentioned in some other places, many times I have received letters, especially from American satsangis, indicating that there is a certain idea among some people that we have some kind of soul-mate, and unless we meet that soul-mate somewhere inside or outside, we cannot merge back into the Lord. That is a wrong notion, for every soul has its own individual relation with the Lord. There is no such thing as a soul-mate. That idea is simply a justification for certain weaknesses. Absolutely, we have no soul-mate. We are working our way back to the Lord independently. We have karmic relationship with people that come and go, but that does not mean that if we do not have any karmic relationship with a particular person we will not go back to Him. Every soul is independent.

Q. 326. Maharaj Ji, is it possible in this first Initiation, since we are married—it has been stated that if you are married you will not make it this time?

A. I do not think I have read anywhere, in any book, that married people do not make any progress.

Q. That is what I thought too. We had a discussion about that, and the discussion was that if you have karma to pay, you cannot go within until your Pralabdh (Fate) karma is liquidated?

A. Sister, how do you know what is your karma that has to be paid?

Q. Well, later on we got around it like that by discussing it, and we do not think when we say these things, till later on when we begin to gather up all the different points?

A. No, sister. I do not think marriage makes any difference at all. It is attachment which pulls us back, and I think that marriage is more of a duty, a responsibility, than of an attachment. Those attachments that we feel in the beginning in marriage, sooner or later we discover that they are not attachments at all. They are for a certain selfish purpose, and as soon as we realize that, I do not think anybody can keep us back. We can perform our duties much better as a husband, a wife, a son, a brother, or as any relative, provided that we know what is our duty and though living with them and being with them, we are yet not attached to them. Then we have something better to be attached to. That is the main thing. When we are attached to a bulldozer and at the same time we are holding a dog by his chain, the dog cannot pull us back. If we keep the dog's chain in our hand, even if we forget that we are attached to the bulldozer, the dog cannot pull us back, but the bulldozer will pull us, and the dog may even be pulled along with us. So when we are attached to that Sound, that Audible Life Stream, the Shabd, though being in this world and performing our duties here, we are not being pulled back into it. We think that the worldly people are holding chains (attachments to us) in their hands, but compared with the pull of the Shabd, they are so light that they are just being pulled toward us by those very chains. So, if we are living in Sant Mat, as I just explained to you, these duties do not bother us, do not make any difference. It is the mind, not the body so much, that matters. There-

fore, we have to do our duty, and keep the mind in Shabd.

You will find that most saints were married. They had families and they were householders. There are certain advantages in marriage, for then there is not too much suppression of certain desires, and not too much thinking about those things. They come and go; otherwise, there may be suppression, there may be always unconscious pulling downwards, which one is not even aware of sometimes. So from nature's point of view, it is always better to be married, to be a householder, an honest householder, and then also to do our duties.

Actually, we never leave anything in this world. We may think we have withdrawn from the world, but really we have not withdrawn from the world. Even if you run to the forest, even if you take shelter in the temples, in the churches, what do you leave? We need clothes to cover ourselves, we need food for our stomachs, we need shelter, and we get these things. Even there we require all these things; so we do not leave anything. While being in this world, being a part of this world, these are natural instincts of human beings, to which we are not to become a slave, and yet the natural instincts will take their own course. We should do our duty, and at the same time do our main duty. We should not forget that duty for which we got this human body. If we keep that destination in view, keep that part of this human life in view, and we walk in that light, then these things do not even bother us.

Q. 327. Where does the concept of the male and female, man and wife, come from, that is taught by those masters and yogis of the

lower planes? At one time I was associated with a master that taught this. He claimed to be a master, I should say, and he taught that you had to unite as man and wife in order to progress up the spiritual path, and I just wondered if you knew any thing about the basis of this teaching. He did not consider you as a whole unless you married a woman and united as man and wife, male and female.

A. You mean that an unmarried woman and an unmarried man can never tread on the Path?

Q. That was his teaching.

A. I had better not discuss it. (Laughter) There is no such bar, I may tell you, brother. That may be a justification for marriage, I do not know; but there is no such bar. Some people have the erroneous concept that we always have a soul-mate, and unless we meet that soul-mate, we will not go back to the Lord. That is absolutely wrong. There is no question of a soul-mate.

Everyone is an individual, an individual drop of that ocean. And we have to work individually, through our karmas, to merge back into that ocean. Our karmas bring us in contact with certain people who become husbands, wives, children, friends, relatives, business associates, or with whom we have to have some dealings—pleasant and unpleasant—during our lifetime. We meet all types of people and have all types of associations, due to the debt of our karmas. But it is not true that unless we are married we can make no spiritual progress. Definitely, a householder has certain advantages on the Path, which you can see; but it is nothing like that; and that too, only when the householders are both going straight. If the married couple has a divergence of views and are always conflicting and fighting, that

of course is no good and of no help to either of them.

Q. 328. Is there such a thing as a lost soul?

A. I think we are all lost souls. By lost souls, I mean the souls who have forgotten the Lord. From what I understand, probably the lost soul means that soul which has forgotten its origin. We have just given ourselves to the world, have forgotten our real Home, have forgotten our own real Father. We are all lost souls and we are all struggling souls. But we should not remain lost. We should try to find out the purpose of the soul's being in this human form, for then only can we get rid of this condition, this sad state of affairs.

Q. 329. After the third or fourth life does every soul return to God? Is there such a thing as a lost soul? That is, if a soul does not find a Master in his fourth life, is he lost?

A. Every soul does not go back to the Lord after the third or fourth form. That is absolutely wrong. Only those souls which are destined to go back to the Lord, which are the souls marked by the Lord, will go back to the Lord. And whenever they will go back to the Lord they will go back through His sons, through the Masters who initiate them, who put them on the spiritual Path. With His grace, with His help, when they spiritually advance, when they clear off their karmas, when they drive out their desires, when they root out their attachments, then only do those souls, with the help of their Masters, go back to the Lord. From the time of Initiation, this may be accomplished within one birth, within two births, within three births; but at the most it will take four births. It depends upon the individual, as to how

much he has to clear, how much he is required to develop himself spiritually.

But those people who do not follow the Path; those people who have no desire to go back to the Lord; those people who do not drive out the desires and attachments of the world from themselves, the question of their going back to the Lord does not arise at all, whether they come into this world a hundred times or two hundred times. They will always be a part of this huge chain. They will come and go. It is only when we have a desire to go back to Him that we think about Him or can go back to Him.

Q. 330. Is it true that every soul in existence will at some time get back to its Father's House?

A. Only the Father knows how long He wants the universe to go on. If He does not want it to go on, every soul will go back to Him. If He wants the universe to continue, every soul cannot go back to Him. When He wants the universe to be non-existent, naturally the souls have no other place to go to but to merge back into Him. But so long as He wants the universe to go on, all souls cannot go back to Him. Some will have to be here.

Q. 331. Does all humanity eventually arrive at the final Goal, without any exception?

A. When He wants to finish this play, ultimately everybody will go back and merge into Him. We do not know how long He wants this play to go on. So if He wants to finish it, and if He wants to save us, He can save us tomorrow. He will just finish what we see in this world. But as long as it is going on,

we are a part of the agony and we are trying to escape it.

Q. Will He eventually save us?

A. We cannot question Him. It is entirely up to Him. He knows His plans. He knows Himself.

Q. 332. When the drop merges into the ocean, does it ever come out again? Or can it come out again?

A. Would a drop like to come out after merging into the ocean?

Q. It could not get into trouble, could it?

A. Would it like to remain a drop and not become an ocean? Would the soul like to remain a soul and not become God? Rather, it is happy that the thing which was a barrier has been removed. The other day I explained that if you take a candle to a fire and put it in the fire, the flame of the candle and the flame of the fire merge. Then you cannot differentiate which is the candle-flame and which is the fire.

Q. 333. There is a lack of opposites. I was just wondering if it were possible for it to identify again?

A. If the desire is still in us to remain away from Him, we will not reach Him in the first place. These desires are with the mind, and the mind is left far behind. Then where is the desire left?

Q. 334. What would constitute final liberation? Is it final liberation once you get there, or is final liberation the elimination of all desires on a lower plane?

A. Final liberation is explained generally from two points of view. One is, as far as birth and death are concerned, that we get liberated from that even if, sometimes, we cross only the first stage. This is so, providing that we have a competent Master to save us

from birth and death, if we are thoroughly attached to the Shabd or Nam, and we have no attachments left for anything in this world and have been able to clear all those attachments. We may not have made much progress inside yet, as far as the spiritual path is concerned, but as far as physical bondage is concerned, we will be saved from birth and death; however, we have yet a long distance to cover to go back to the Lord, to go back and merge into Him. So we can only call it final liberation when the soul merges back into the Lord. But as far as final physical liberation is concerned, that you can achieve, even if you have not progressed much inside, as that only depends on how much you have achieved detachment from this world. If you have cleared your attachments and you do not have very strong desires to bring you back into this world, you are saved as far as this physical bondage is concerned. But unless the soul merges back into the Lord, it can still drop back again.

So final liberation can only be when the soul merges back into the Lord; but from birth and death we do sometimes escape, even if we cross only the first stage, or even if we have not crossed the first stage but we have a perfect Master and we do not have very strong desires or very strong attachments with the world. For example, if you are attached to a bulldozer, naturally you will be drawn wherever the bulldozer goes. So, if we have attachments in the world, they will pull us back. If we are attached to the Shabd or the Master—He is to go back to His Home—our attachment to Him automatically takes us back to our own Home. But we may still have a lot of karmas to clear and a long journey to travel, and sometimes we do it after death, providing that

we have been put on the Path during our lifetime and have no desires that will bring us back into this world.

Q. 335. Could you explain to us why we should want to return to the Source?

A. Brother, it is very clear that since our separation from our Source we have not been happy in this world. Even in the human form which is known to be the top of the creation, if you analyze, you will not find anybody happy in this world. Some are suffering from diseases, some due to lack of children, some due to too many children, still others due to lack of security in life; some are frustrated in their love affairs and some in their domestic life. If you go to the prisons, you will find that they are filled with prisoners. Go to the courts and hear the details of the victims, the criminals. If you look around in the whole world, you will not find any peace anywhere. When, in this human form which is known to be the top of creation, we cannot find peace, then what is the use of this form? We will find peace only when the soul merges back into the Lord. That is why we all seek Him. Without meeting Him, without merging back into Him, we will never find eternal peace. We cannot be saved from the cycle of birth and death, from the wheel of chaurasi (eight million four hundred thousand species), unless we merge back into Him. That is why we want to return to our Source, who is the Lord Himself.

If we could be truly happy in this world, nobody would ever even think about the Lord. You know the Lord may give us anything in this world. Go to the richest people in the world, go to the healthiest man in the world, go to these politicians who command

—they say—the whole world, are they happy? Perhaps they are more miserable than we are. We often sleep six or seven hours or more at night, but they have to depend upon pills, tranquilizers. No one can ever be really happy without meeting the Lord, without merging back into Him. Unless our soul goes back, merges back into the Lord, we will never get that peace of mind, that happiness, nor can we be carefree, nor save ourselves from the cycle of birth and death. But for that, nobody would search for Him; and that is why we seek Him, our Source.

Q. 336. Does that mean you cannot be happy until you reach Sach Khand?

A. We can be happy only when we go back and merge into Him. We can be happy only when we are on the path to our Home. The nearer we are to Him, the happier we are becoming every day. The real happiness will come only when you merge back into Him after meeting Him face to face. When you are coming towards your home from a long distance, as you get nearer to your home you begin to have a little more sense of security within you. A sense of happiness starts coming within you as you come nearer, and a feeling that you will soon be there. When you see your home from a distance you are happy that you have seen it, yet you are still away from your house. The actual peace you will get only when you enter your house, when you are in your home. Similarly, the nearer we are to the Lord, the nearer we are to our destination, the more contentment we feel within; the more bliss, the more peace, the more happiness we feel within. The true and eternal

happiness, bliss, peace and contentment we can feel only when the soul is merged back into the Lord.

Q. 337. Master, carrying the same thought forward, when we do merge with the Supreme Father, do we merge to a state where we lose our consciousness, as in the overall consciousness, or do we maintain individuality?

A. I think that yesterday we discussed this point. Who would not like to merge back into Him? Who would like to retain his individual consciousness, while being in the presence of the Lord? These questions come only when one is under the sway of the mind. Due to our ego, we think we are greater. Why should we merge into anything else? But when we reach that stage, there is no ego; there is only merging. You get peace in losing yourself, losing your identity, in becoming part of the other, in becoming part of God. No drop would like to remain away from the ocean; yet a drop is something different from the ocean. We merge into Him; still we are separate from Him. But nobody likes to retain his individuality at that stage. Even in our human love we always like to do what pleases the other person. We take ourselves out of our 'self'. We feel that we are the other person. We feel that it is not our self moving about, it is the other person. When this happens in the physical human love, what of the love where there is no mind and we are just attracted to Him, we merge back into Him, we just forget our self; there is no 'self' left there! Who would not like that stage?

Q. 338. Are new souls being created all the time?

A. No.

Q. 339. Were all souls created at one time?

A. That is right, at the time of creation.

Q. The time of creation? There are only just so many souls? An unidentifiable, fixed number?

A. Yes.

Q. 340. Maharaj Ji, some Western teachings, philosophies or schools believe in group souls. In other words, souls also merge in one group?

A. There is nothing like group souls. Some souls have associations from the past that cause them to be born together, certain karmic associations; but you cannot call them group souls. They are individual souls and for a certain time they are together; but they may go different ways. They may not just go together all through even the one physical life.

Q. I guess there are some professors who teach that there are group souls, but I do not go along with it. They seem to think all of us are a particle of this, whether it is a human being or—?

A. No, no, that is not right.

Q. All are individual souls?

A. This karmic association brought us all together for a period. We also have karmic associations with some other group, or some other associations to fulfill. So it is not true that we will always be led together everywhere. Each soul has its own karma to fulfill; but eventually, all those who are progressing on the Path will merge back into Him.

12 (ii) KAL (THE NEGATIVE POWER)

Q. 341. In *Philosophy of the Masters* it is said that Kal had done seventy yugas of austerities and another sixty-four yugas to receive souls. Was it souls on the entire universe, or souls just on this earth? What souls did he receive?

A. All the souls in this universe are under his domain, and as long as we are under his domain we cannot get release from birth and death. We have to go beyond the domain of Kal. The Lord has created the whole world, the Lord has created Kal, and the Lord has given the administration of the whole universe to Kal, that Negative Power, or whatever name you give it.

As long as we are under that domain we are victims of birth and death. We can get release only when we go beyond that. And the only method of going beyond is to worship somebody who is beyond that domain, and that is the Lord Himself. So, with His love, with His worship, we can go beyond the reach of Kal. Since we have not seen the Lord in human form, in this world and yet we want to love the Lord and worship Him, so we search for His men, God-Men; we search for His devotees, His sons. They are in touch with the Lord, and we have got to be in touch with them. Through them we also come in touch with the Lord, as Christ said in the Bible, "You have seen me; I have seen the Father; therefore you have seen the Father". The fact is that saints are in tune with the Lord, and when we merge ourself in a saint, we automatically merge back into the Lord, because saints merge back into the Lord. When our love and devotion will take us to a saint, a living Master, then we shall also automatically reach the

Lord by doing the spiritual practice as instructed by the saint.

Saints often explain to us that the relationship of the saints with the Lord is like that of waves with the ocean. A wave rises from the ocean and again merges back into the ocean. Similarly, if you throw anything to the waves, the waves will take it back to the bottom of the sea, and it merges with the waves back into the bottom of the sea.

How to merge back? The Masters instruct us in spiritual practice. We practise that, and merge into them. They are already merged into the Lord, so we also become a part of the Lord. Jesus said, "The Father is in me and I am in the Father". So when we become 'He', the saint who has already merged into the Father, we also become the Father. It is just through that channel that we go across the domain of Kal; but as long as we remain in his domain we cannot get release from birth and death. Real love and devotion for the Lord, through His saints, the waves of His ocean, alone can take us back to the Lord.

Q. 342. Maharaj Ji, will you explain now the difference between Kal, and Jehova, and Radha Soami?

A. I do not know, because my knowledge of the Bible is very limited, I must admit. But I do know the difference between Kal and Radha Soami. Radha Soami is just a name of the Lord, nothing else. It is no religion; it is nothing new. It is the same as Sant Mat, the same teachings of the saints, which have been given to us now. Radha Soami is just another name for the Lord. Swami Ji has called Him 'Anami', meaning 'Nameless', 'One Who Has No Name' or

'Without Any Name'. Kal is a different entity, and we have to go beyond its reach. Mind is the agent of Kal and always likes to keep us within its sway. But, we have to rise above it. Only by His grace, actually, frankly speaking, can we get out of it. Otherwise, even the artificial things appear to us as real, while actually everything in Kal's domain is just a mirage. Nothing but His grace can put us on the right Path. But we have to make a research with our limited intelligence, and when we are honest and sincere in our search for Him, it is for Him to put us on the right Path.

Q. 343. We satsangis are very much acquainted with the ruler of this physical universe as Kal. Many of us are pondering over the question whether he is a being with a soul or whether he is just universal mind, activated by spiritual current from the Supreme Father?

A. You want to know what he looks like?

Q. Well, we are trying to imagine a possible outline of his form, if we can. Of course, he does not mean much to a satsangi.

A. I think we had better not analyze what he looks like. We should not try to bother about it at all. It is a Power. It is our mind. Universal mind is Kal. The Lord actually is Shabd, and Shabd emanates from the Lord. Similarly, the mind emanates from Kal, and the mind ultimately is Kal.

We should not try to formulate any opinion of what Kal looks like. Why you should even want to think about him, I do not understand. For instance, if we are good citizens, we never bother about the police; on the other hand, criminals are always frightened of the police, as to what they will do to them, how

they will punish them. They are always worried and feel guilty because they know that they have done something for which they are bound to be punished. When we come on the Path and are attending to our meditation, what fear can we have left about Kal? What is there to think about him? We are all good citizens, and we have a Guide to lead us. Why should we even think about what he looks like?

Q. 344. Would it be correct to say that Kal is just a lower manifestation of the Supreme Father?

A. Nothing has come into being without the Father. Nothing existed before creation, but the Father. What we see is the projection of that Supreme Father, the Supreme Being. So Kal has also come from Him, and he has an allotted task, which he is doing. Saints also have allotted tasks, which they are doing, and we all have allotted tasks, which we are doing. This has come from the Supreme Father.

Q. 345. Kal cannot do anything on his own? He has to obey orders from the Supreme Being?

A. Whatever he is doing, he is doing by orders of the Supreme Being. If we admit that Kal does everything independently, it would mean that he is more powerful than the Lord. Everything is under the command of the Lord, the Supreme Father. Nothing is beyond Him. For example, you have a President, you have an Inspector General of Police, you have an Inspector General of Jails. They each have a duty to perform, but they derive their powers from the President. They are not independent of the President. Each one derives his powers from the same source. They have different duties to perform, and they are

faithfully performing their duties. We cannot abuse them. Why should we worry about the police when we are good citizens? We cannot abuse the jailer either. He is to do his duty. So Kal does his own duty, and we are not concerned nor bothered about him in the least.

Q. 346. How strong is Kal?

A. Kal is the Negative Power, and mind is its agent, and mind does not want any soul to go back to the Lord. Mind plays all sorts of tricks, but we constantly have to give our attention and time to the devotion to the Lord. If we let our mind get loose, then we have to dance to its tune. When we always keep it under control, then we are naturally safe from its sting. So mind is a very powerful enemy, but when it is attached to Shabd, it becomes our best friend. (Maharaj Ji mentioned and explained at length how the mind can become our friend, which has already been explained several times, so is omitted here.) We cannot become unconscious of the mind. We always have to remain quite alert, for we never know when it may try to deceive us.

Q. 347. If everything really is a part of God, Kal is a part of God, how did he become such an evil enemy to man?

A. This is all God's creation. In order to run a universe, He needs all sorts of forces to keep people here. If Kal had not been here, we would all have gone back to the Lord again. This universe would not have existed. In order that the universe should go on, He wants such things, so that we get under their sway and forget the Lord; but still He has also kept a Way or Path, so that we can get release from

this domain and go back to Him. If He does not want this universe, it cannot exist even for a day. It is here because He wants it to be here, and whatever you see, all forces have come from Him.

A limited example is a State: Everything comes from the head of the state; all the awards and all the punishments come from him; the courts come from him; even the police come from him; the jails come from him—all departments are under him. If you do good deeds, you get meritorious awards. If you do bad deeds, the police treat you harshly, perhaps put you in prison and you have to account for what you have done. But we cannot condemn the President or head of the state for all that. He is all good. He does not say anything to anybody, about what we are doing here. We are getting merits, we are getting punishments, according to our actions; but he, the President, has to lay out all sorts of administration to run this, so he needs police as well as those who give rewards, and jailers and executioners, too. He needs all these officers in order to carry on. Similar is the case on a universal scale, as long as the Lord wants the universe to go on. But those people who are good citizens are not afraid of the jails and the police. Those people who commit crimes are always conscious of them and feel guilty and frightened of the police and the jails.

In the same way, if we remain good citizens of the Lord, we are doing our duty in this world as well as our spiritual practice, we are not frightened of nor giving any thought to what Kal is and what mind is, or what any other forces are, because these are required for the people who are not rightly making use of their time, who are enjoying themselves through

the senses and worldly pleasures, and have forgotten Him.

Q. 348. I thought that so much of us belongs to Kal?

A. Kal is just the administrator of the universe. That does not mean that God is not in every one of us. Our heart yearns for God. We love Him, we worship Him, whether we know how to worship Him or not.

Some people get confused, thinking that those who are not on the Path probably are not loving God. That is wrong. They are loving God, but they do not know how to love God. Whatever the way, they love Him, and do not love Kal. They do not know who he is. But they are under the sway of Kal, so they do not know how to love God. Actually, the inclination of the soul for the Lord is always there. That alone forces us to seek Him. Otherwise we would never even think about Him. But we do not know how to seek Him, unless He wants us to, unless His grace is there to put us on the right Path. He is in every one of us. Kal is just the administrator of the universe. Kal sees to it that we do not get out of it, that is all. This does not mean that God is not within us. He is there. But we do not know how to reach Him. We are under Kal's influence. We want to reach the Lord, but Kal has put us on the wrong track. He does not let us worship in the right way. But our heart is never for Kal. Instinctively, it is always longing for the Lord, and tries to go back to the Lord.

Somebody told me that he or she probably has been worshiping Kal before coming to Sant Mat. That is wrong. When we do not know even of the

existence of Kal, how can we worship him? We want to be in tune with the Lord, but we do not know how to worship Him. So with His grace we are put on the Path to worship Him and to get out of the reach of that Administrator, that Kal, that Negative Power, the Universal Mind, Devil, Satan or whatever name you give it. He is not without purpose. He is not without the Will of the Lord. He is there through the Will of the Lord. Nothing exists without the Will of the Lord. Kal does not derive his power from anywhere else.

Q. 349. Would I be correct in assuming that Kal is the physical mind which keeps running out all the time?

A. The soul has its connection with the Lord. Mind is the agent of Kal, who is its source, just as the Lord is the source of the soul. You may call it universal mind, you may call it Kal. Soul is the essence of the Lord.

Q. 350. can soul and mind ever overcome Kal?

A. Yes. In the body, the seat of the soul and mind knotted together is just between and behind the eyes. From here our mind is being pulled down by the senses. So our mind has become the slave of the senses, and the soul has become a slave of the mind, for through the mind it also is being drawn to the senses. Now we are to reverse the process. When mind wants to go to the senses, it will go there, but if it refuses to be attracted to them, it will leave the senses. When the mind leaves the senses, it becomes our friend. Why do we want to withdraw our mind from the senses? Because the soul is under the control of the mind. When, with the help of Shabd,

our mind comes back to its own home, the soul gets released from the mind, and the process is thus reversed. Then the soul is controlling the mind, and the mind is controlling the senses.

It is with the help of Simran and Dhyan that we have to withdraw the mind from the senses, and by attaching our mind to the Shabd, we have to withdraw the soul from the mind. As long as the mind is running towards the senses, you cannot have a worse enemy. When the mind withdraws from the senses and is attached to the Shabd, we cannot have a better friend. Unless the mind goes back to its origin, the soul can never get released from the mind. We have only to convert this enmity to friendship, by the grace of the Lord, by means of meditation, as imparted to us through His Saints.

12 (iii). THE HIGHER REGIONS

Q. 351. May I ask you please, Sir how accurate are the descriptions by Dr. Johnson in his book, *The Path of the Masters*, on the four grand division, the Sat Desh, Brahmand, Anda and Pinda; are they accurate, word by word? Are those areas accurate —I mean, is that description accurate, word by word?

A. It is very difficult to describe the spiritual world by mere words, but then we cannot do without words. You cannot measure and weigh every word, but naturally, only through languages can anything be described—to a lesser or greater degree. After all, language is a mode of expression to describe things but any language is most inadequate to describe these regions. Sometimes certain points are under- and sometimes over-emphasized; but we learn to discount written languages on certain points.

Q 352 Would you say that in as far as using language is concerned, that there are four regions?

A. As I just explained to you, many Saints have tried to explain those regions. Mostly the Saints have tried to explain them in the same number of divisions, but many mystics, even Indian mystics, have just referred to two regions—one consisting of what lies below Trikuti, and the other as all that which is above Trikuti; one region under the reign of Mind and Maya, and the other region above the reign of Mind and Maya. But others have referred to five regions, and still others have subdivided the fifth region. We should not get confused with how many regions or stages have been described. Actually, it is the same journey, and they are not water-tight compartments. The thing has to be described in

one way or another; so these languages just describe them. Some have described just two regions; some have classified the two regions into four, some into five and some into eight regions. Actually, it is the same journey, and covers the same territory, whether classified as consisting of two, four, five or eight regions.

Q. 353. Each time you go out to this Infinite region, if Infinite is Infinite, is extends all the way but each time you go out you are exploring more of this Infinite, of God?

A. Naturally, unless one has reached the destination one has to explore more and more every time. Then if you reach the destination, the goal, what can there be beyond it?

Q. 354. Master, are there regions above Sach Khand, or is that the ultimate?

A. Sister, Sach Khand is the last, but some people divide it into subdivisions, called Alakh, Agam and Anami. They are just subdivisions of the same region. Some people say there are just two regions, one up to Trikuti, and the other beyond Trikuti. These are not water-tight descriptions, I would say. Sometimes we just get lost in trying to describe regions. The aim is the Lord, and we are to merge back into Him. Call it just one journey, make it four stages, make it two stages, make it eight stages; these are just quibblings with words. Generally, Saints have subdivided the fifth region into another three regions, calling them Alakh, Agam and Anami or Radha Soami. Or, one can call the whole fifth region Sach Khand. It makes no difference.

Q. 355. Master, on the astral plane, is it possible for souls there without the benefit of even having known a Sat Guru, to ever come

to the realization such as we do in the human body? And for the first time realize the true Lord and not be satisfied with where they are? Would they have a chance to go on further from there by their own efforts?

A. They need to come back into the flesh and find a living Master.

Q. 356. Is it then a fact that we need the body in order to grow spiritually, and without the body or in the astral there is no growth whatsoever?

A. There is growth also in the astral planes.

Q. Is it very slow?

A. Very slow, that is right, very slow. That is why this body is known as the top of creation. There are also astral forms, astral regions in the creation, but the human body is considered to be the top of creation, because while living in this body we can make better progress, better growth than in those astral regions. But once we have a Master, we do make progress from there too, without coming back into the human form.

Q. 357. Maharaj Ji, when one dies and goes to another region, what are the activities of the soul? Are they like anything on this earth?

A. I think I explained that to you this morning. There is no activity. The activity is that of love, to make our way up. What I said yesterday is that we make much better spiritual progress by being in this human form than from inside these astral planes, because here we see so much misery around us that we want to escape from it. So we are always thinking about the Lord. We want to go back to Him. We do not want to remain here, so we try to work hard to go back to Him. Without intense longing we

cannot merge back into Him. And there, since there is no misery, no birth nor death, the yearning to go back is very little.

Q. 358. It is my understanding that when one dies and the soul goes to one of these regions, one spends perhaps about fifteen hundred years there before one comes back into a human body. What does one do these fifteen hundred years?

A. I cannot set the time-limit as to how long you have to stay there, as that all depends on how much karma remains to be worked off But having a Master, we may not have to come back into the human body at all. We can always make our way up from there. We only come back into a human body if we have certain attachments left in this world. That alone brings us back to this world. Otherwise we do not have to come back.

Q. 359. Is there suffering in the astral plane? Or is this the plane for offsetting our bad karma?

A. There is no physical suffering there. Mental suffering is there, in the sense that we are away from the Lord. Physical suffering is only in the physical body.

Q. 360. Is it possible to give and receive instructions on the astral plane, like when sleeping?

A. When you are sleeping you are not on the astral plane. You are just at the throat center. But we can sometimes get instructions in sleep. We think it is sleep, but actually it may not be sleep.

Q. 361. Master, once you get to the first stage, in other words, you get up there and cross over and meet the Master in his Radiant Form, after that stage,even though He may appear before you there,

suppose you get there in a lifetime, is there a chance you may fall back down?

A. Yes.

Q. You mean there is no guarantee that once you get up there with Him?

A. Well there are certain forceful karmas that pull us down again, sometimes, even from the second stage. As long as the mind is there, you can never be sure. And when you get release from the mind, nothing can pull you back down.

Q. 362. At what level is cosmic consciousness?

A. Sister, that is a scientific term which people try to fit in with the spiritual. Our consciousness, right now, is at the eyes, and how far above the eyes can anyone take his consciousness, without the aid of a teacher? Will that help to give you some concept as to what cosmic consciousness is?

Q. I read about the different levels above the eyes. Now I am trying to figure how our concept of cosmic consciousness, where will that fit in?

A. It is a matter of degree of your experience, is it not? It depends upon how much you are experiencing, either on a level within your nine outlets, the nine apertures or gates of the body, as we call it in this work; or have you gotten into the tenth door and gone on beyond that point? So you wanted to know what level it is? The tenth door is above the eyes. The Tenth Door, Daswan Dwar, as they call it in Sant Mat literature. The Third Eye, Tisra Til or the Single Eye denotes the same thing.

Q. 363. What was in the beginning?

A. First, there was only the Lord, who is without beginning and without end. He has projected Himself everyhwere. There was nothing besides Him. He was the only one. All that we see is just His own projection. Everything is projected from Him. If we admit that there was something besides Him, then the Lord is not one. He is the only One—always was, is and will be. He is everywhere, and everything is His own projection.

Q. 364. Maharaj Ji, does all human life start in lower forms and evolve upwards? I mean, in animal forms, or even lower?

A. He created the whole thing. The creation did not develop slowly from one thing. He simply projected Himself, through His Word, the Shabd, and the whole world and everything in it was created at once.

Q. 365. Man is a created man?

A. Some of the human beings were created as human beings; and some have transmigrated into the lower species also.

Q. To animals, and man evolved to higher forms?

A. To animals and lower. And from the lower species he has come up.

Q. 366. And do animals take on higher forms?

A. Oh, yes. Every soul is given a chance to come up to the status of a human being.

Q. Insects, too?

A. Yes, insects too. They will get a chance to become human beings at least once, whether they make use of that opportunity or not.

Q. 367. When we look upon an ant, a little object crawling, could we assume that soul was once a human form?

A. Yes.

Q. 368. Everything, except the form which is God, is actually unreal, because only that which is eternal is real, is that right?

A. That is right. How can we say anything is real when it is not permanent—here today and gone tomorrow?

Q. 369. And everything that we see out here is like a sunbeam, and at the most distant end of that sunbeam it looks out, and everything that we see, that is the way we become mesmerized in this world? And only by looking back through the sunbeam you see reality, is that true?

A. That is right. All that we see with the physical eyes is made up of one or more of the five elements, namely, earth, water, fire, air and ether. And all these five elements are inimical to each other. But with the help of, or due to that ray of Shabd, the soul, which is also a ray of the Supreme Father, all of the five elements are contained and active in a human body, each one manifesting them according to his own karmas—in that proportion. But all the five elements are active, in a greater or lesser degree, in every human body. We are moving about, but the day that the Lord takes the soul away from the body, all these five elements begin to decompose. The earth goes back to the earth, the water goes back to the water, and each element merges back into its own origin. So it is a

salvation from the physical body when these five elements merge back into their own origin. That is the physical death. And salvation from birth and death is attained when the soul reaches Trikuti, Brahm, and the mind merges back into the universal mind. Salvation for a soul is when it merges back into the Supreme Father, its own origin.

For the purpose of functioning in this world, the soul has taken the association of the mind and senses; but, unfortunately the soul has not remained in control of the mind and senses. Mind is fond of pleasures, and so it has become a slave of the senses, dragging the soul down along with it to the extent that now the soul has become a slave of the senses also, through the agency of the mind. As a result, the mind as well as the soul has forgotten its origin and purpose.

We get a body according to our actions and reactions, whether it is in the human form or anywhere else. But we can find the Path out of this mess, or out of this jail, only in the human form, and this grace is bestowed upon us by Him, just for this very purpose. So, while being in this body, we should always keep our destination in view and try to tread on that Path whcich leads to our destination. We should never forget it. We should perform our worldly duties and other responsibilities which we have to discharge, while being in this world, according to our karma, so to say. But we should always keep our destination in view and try to tread on that Path which leads to our Home. The Path leading to our destination should always be our main road. We should not deviate to the left or the right, but keep our Goal always in mind while traveling straight on that Path.

Q. 370. We know that God is Love; surely God does not create all this killing, suffering in the world; surely man did that by his own sin?

A. Well, sister, from where has the sin come?

Q. It is man's wrong doing, breaking the laws of God?

A. How does man happen to do wrong things when God has created all love?

Q. That is what I often wonder?

A. Everything has come from the Lord. All that you see is His creation. Even the mind has come from Him; the Negative Power has come from Him. He has put the whole creation under the charge of Kal, the Negative Power. And Kal takes care of the whole creation, so he has made his own rules to keep souls here. We have to abide by those rules while simultaneously disentangling ourselves on our way back to the Lord. There is nothing which has not come from the Lord, and when God is all Love, from where has the evil come? Negation of Love becomes evil. When the sun is there, the shade is there. The sun has only light, but the sun also creates the shade.

Q. 371. I wonder if this world was not in the beginning a Garden of Eden and we people were just like children playing with our toys and having a happy time until we got jealous of each other, wanting each other's toys, and so forth?

A. Maybe, but whatever seed of jealousy came in us, it also has come from the Lord. Nothing has come from outside.

Q. That is what seems so confusing, because it all seems so wrong?

A. We often feel that when God is all Love, from where did evil come? That is what we mean. The

sun is always in the sky and it is always shining; then from where does the darkness come? It is only when that side of the earth that is facing the sun that there is sunshine; and even then, sometimes the clouds interfere, but we have daylight just the same. When there is negation of light, there is darkness, and the darkness is in proportion to the negation, the obstacle which prevents the light from shining through. Similarly, when we have no love for the Lord, when our face is turned away from Him, there is evil.

Q. 372. Master, in the four cycles of time, like the golden age, the silver age, the copper age and the iron age, did the souls in the golden age have physical bodies at that time? Was it on earth?

A. Sister, this is just our classification. You can classify this into four ages, or you can classify it into twenty ages. This is, after all, just our own classification. Body is there in every age.

Q. 373. Will you please tell us what is meant by dissolution, and the grand or major dissolution?

A. I think that all this is mentioned in our books. By dissolution is meant the end of the physical universe. Grand dissolution is the absorption of everything, even beyond the astral plane, back into its origin. The final dissolution, when He is finished with this 'play', when and if the whole creation ceases, will be when everything is merged back into Him, the source of everything. Saints have tried to explain this to us through the medium of language, but the intellect cannot comprehend all this, so we should not get confused. The saints do not want us to get entangled by thinking about these things. We should concern ourselves only about this physical universe and make use of the

means which the Lord has provided for our escape from it and our ultimate return to Him.

Q. 374. After merging back into the Lord, does man maintain a separate consciousness?

A. In merging, it is still separate. Being in it, you are separate from it. But you are not conscious of your consciousness. There you just merge yourself. Even in worldly love, when you are with your beloved, you forget yourself completely and want to please only the beloved. You are so absorbed in the beloved that you do not even think about where you are or what you are, even in these physical or worldly emotions. The spiritual is much more fascinating, absorbing; it is much sublimer and nobler. The bliss of merging into the Supreme Being cannot be expressed in mortal language. There is no thought of individuality, consciousness, or anything else. It is all Love, all Bliss, for, in merging, we become the Supreme Being and He is All, He is everything

Q. 375. Then there is just one consciousness?

A. The Lord is one. When we merge back into Him we become the Lord. We become a part of Him. A drop has its own identity when it is in the mud. When it leaves the ground by means of evaporation, it still has its own identity, separate from the ground and separate from the cloud. But when it merges back into the cloud, it becomes the cloud. That minute part of the cloud becomes the cloud by merging into it. When we love the Lord, we do not like to remain away from the Beloved. We lose our identity by merging back into That, and yet we remain separate from That. For instance, if you merge the flame of

a lighted candle into the flame of a fire, can you differentiate whether it is the flame of the fire or the flame of the candle? When you take the candle away from the fire, you have an independent, individual flame. But when you take it back into the fire, it merges into the fire and is no longer a mere candle light. Similarly, the soul merges into the Lord.

Q. 376. Actually, it is the mind and not the soul that does not want to give up its identity?

A. That is right. Mind is the stumbling block. This ego does not like to lose its identity. We always want to observe that I am so-and-so, I am so-and-so, and it is the 'I'-ness that we do not want to lose. We perhaps think that we have developed it in this modern world, and that it is something quite unique; but the fact remains that the ego is a great stumbling block in our way. This is what we have to lose.

Q. 377. Can the conscious personality be projected to God-Realization, leaving the body at will and returning after gaining this desired goal of God-Realization, and know of it?

A. That is what the spiritual practice is for. We are trying to withdraw ourselves at will, to be there, and to come back at our will, and be here. That is the whole object of meditation.

Q. 378. I have heard that some schools say there are seven bodies, and some schools say there are three bodies—physical, astral and causal. Can you comment on that, please?

A. Brother, I only know that according to Sant Mat literature there are three. I have not heard or read about the seven.

Q. 379. What is the final goal? Is it where God and I are one? What does this mean, exactly? Is there a sense of individuality?

A. The idea is, "I and God are one", "I and the Father are one". The soul is the essence of the Lord. It has come from the Lord and it will merge back into the Lord and again become one. (Maharaj Ji explained at length about the drop of water merging back into the ocean, the drop of water in the mud merging back into the cloud, and so forth, as has already been explained elsewhere, so is not repeated here). All of us and the Father are one. There was nothing besides the Father when He created the universe. Everything was one and that One was, is and always will be the Father, the Supreme Being. The creation is His projection, and when He again withdraws everything into Himself, it again becomes one.

Q. 380. Ultimately there will be no difference between the drop and God?

A. Ultimately there will be no difference. As yet there is a great difference between the drop and the ocean. But when the drop merges into the ocean there is absolutely no difference.

Q. 381. Can one reach perfection in this life, or does one have to die to go back to the Lord?

A. Sister, we have to die daily to go back to Him.

Q. What do you mean, I do not understand?

A. When death takes place, what do we feel? First our feet become numb, then our legs become numb, then our thighs and the lower portion of the body become numb. Still the soul is in us, still we are conscious, we are still living, life is still within us. When we withdraw the current up to the eye center, the soul leaves the body, and we say the person is

dead. In our spiritual practice, we do the same while living, the only difference being that the connection is not severed and we come back into the body after meditation. It is a method of dying daily. Some Christian saint said, "I die daily". That means that he daily practices the withdrawal of the consciousness right from his feet up to the eye center, in order to follow the spiritual Path within.

We are not to die physically to meet Him, but we have to die daily in our spiritual practice to meet Him. We have to withdraw our consciousness up to the eye center. This is dying while living. Then only we will be on the real Path. We are not to leave the physical body permanently in order to go back to Him. If we are not able to achieve our destination in this life but are on the Path, it is possible that we may achieve it in the next life or in still another life; but we need not wait until after death in order to meet Him. We have to be on the Path while living in a human body, and the aim is also to meet Him during our lifetime.

Q. 382. If one fails to reach God-Realization in this life, will he have another chance?

A. The Lord does not find excuses to send us back again and again. He gives us quite a fair chance to make progress on the Path. In fact, it is our attachments that are pulling us down every time. Generally, if we are not much attached to the world, even though we may not make much headway towards Home, we are given another chance to loosen those attachments. But we have to do that by means of spiritual practice while we are in the human form. However, if we have not found a living Master and refuse to

travel that Path, refuse to think about the Lord, have absolutely no devotion for Him, have no desire whatsoever to go Home, we will not continue to get a human body; we have to go down into a lower species. We then get that form in which we can satisfy all the unfulfilled desires and cravings that come in our mind every day.

It is our karmas and desires coupled together that bring us every time into birth and death. Whatever seeds we sow, we have to come back to reap. Whatever we desire, we crave, and we do not get or sublimate while in this world, we have to take birth to satisfy those unfulfilled desires and cravings. So, unless we clear our karmas, unless we clear ourselves from all these desires and cravings, we cannot escape from birth and death. We do get a chance. The Lord is more merciful. He always helps us and gives us chance after chance to make the best use of our life. But if we refuse to make use of that chance, naturally we have to go down into the lower species.

Q. 383. If a person were to be cut off from life before he makes progress in Nam, what happens?

A. Sister, it depends upon many things but mostly on our desires, our cravings, our longings, our karmas, our attachments and the grace of the Master. Even if we have not made much progress during our life-span but we have not many unfulfilled desires, we have not much attachment with people, places or things—if we have no strong attachment, nothing can bring us back here. We are then taken to certain stages inside, and from there we can work and make our way up. On the other hand, even if we have progressed to some extent inside, and we still have

very strong attachments with the world, we are brought back to clear those attachments, to get rid of those attachments and make further progress and go back to Him.

So it depends on the individual situation. Generally, we will never go backwards. There are no failures in Sant Mat. We always go ahead. If you do not make any pogress in this life, you will get another life in which to make progress. You will be born under much better circumstances, as far as meditation is concerned, as far as devotion to the Lord is concerned; not from a material point of view. If you do not make progress, you will get another birth to make your way up—to improve yourself. You will be in still better circumstances for meditation. Ultimately you will have gone every step, every part of the way forward, not backwards. So there is nothing to fear. We should try to do our best during our life-span and then just leave the rest to Him.

Q. 384. Maharaj Ji, in this morning's discourse it was mentioned that some people waste the human body, a very precious thing. Now would it be considered to be wasted by a person who has lived a good life according to his own spiritual views, as opposed to someone who has not done so—would that person automatically have to go back on the wheel of "eighty-four" (eight million, four hundred thousand species), or could he possibly return in the human body to go on spiritually?

A. Yes, he can. By 'waste' we mean not attending to our meditation, not making use of this human form to realize the Lord. If our direction of travel is not towards Him, but is reversed towards the senses, we are wasting our human form. But if we are not a slave of the senses, and yet we are not doing anything

to realize the Lord, we are doing good things, we are trying to be helpful to people, we are doing everything that we can for the masses; then we are building good karmas which will take us back into the human form again. We are given chance after chance to make the best use of this human form; but unless we make use of the human form in the right sense, we can never get out of the cycle of transmigration.

Q. 385. We find people throughout history with different grades of intellect and intuition. I would like to hear your comments on that.

A. Yes, people can be of different calibers of intellect. Fellow travelers on the Path can be of different grades of intellect, or of different stages of advancement spiritually also. But as long as the road is the same, it does not make any difference whether you have covered ten miles or fifty miles or a hundred miles, because if in this life you have covered ten miles, naturally you start again from the end of that ten miles in the next birth, and then cover perhaps another fifty or sixty miles or more, until ultimately you reach the goal. As long as the road is the same, the teachings are the same for us. So basically, we can try to understand and follow the teachings under the guidance of a living Master.

Q. 386. This evolution, we are told, comes up from the grain of sand, plant life, animal life and the human—are we to understand that every material thing in this universe will finally have to get back to God?

A. Only the souls.

Q. 387. Is there not a soul in a grain of sand?

A. No. For example, there is no soul in this water,

no soul in this stone, no soul in the air, no soul in the fire; yet all of these things are made up of one of the five elements. The whole creation is made of five elements. Yet, if you take those elements individually, they have no souls. Plants have souls, insects have souls, birds have souls, the animals have souls and, of course human beings have souls. They can make their way up to the Lord, after having attained the human form; but not this metal, for it has no soul.

Q. 388. Have these other creatures the same soul as human beings have?

A. Oh yes, the soul is the same. That same soul can be in a human form or in any other living form.

Q. 389. Is spirit in everything that holds it in shape and that goes back to God? How does one differentiate between soul and spirit?

A. These are only different terminologies. Some people use them very loosely. Some people mean different things by these words. Some philosophers never differentiated between the mind and the soul. They just took it to be one. But now, some modern philosophers have differentiated between mind and soul. Indians always have done so. Consequently, sometimes these terminologies are used vaguely. In the Bible the 'Holy Spirit' or 'Holy Ghost' is used to denote the Shabd or Nam, and the Word or Logos means the same thing, as is also the Sound Current or the Audible Life Stream. So the word 'spirit' can mean the Shabd and it can also mean the soul. Some people may refer to it as mind, but mind is not soul; it is something entirely different, as previously explained.

I tell you actually that wave of the Audible Life Stream or Word or Logos or whatever you want to call it—that is soul, and it is that which keeps us together. Without that, neither the body nor the mind can function, for it is the very life of the mind and the body. This body is made up of the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether. All these five elements are inimical to each other. The earth dissolves in water; water is evaporated by fire, and so on. Yet with the aid of the soul, the ray of the Lord, or you may call it spirit, all these elements are collected together to make the human body and we are functioning in this world. The day that the Lord withdraws that spirit or soul from our body, all these five elements will again separate and merge back into their own individual origins. The earth merges back into earth, water, into water, and so on. It is the Spirit, Nam, Shabd, Soul or whatever you may call it that keeps us alive; that is what enables us to function; so we are concerned with that thing, whether you call it soul or spirit. It is the soul that is the life and activates the body and the mind. The moment the Lord withdraws the soul from the body, it becomes useless and decomposes. The words 'soul' and 'spirit' are simply different terminologies to express the same thing.

Q. 390. Then there is no life in a stone, and yet it is held together by spirit?

A. If we analyze it on a still larger scale, there is something in it to hold it together. There is something that holds the whole universe together. When the Lord withdraws that power from the universe, this whole universe will dissolve. Earth will dissolve in

water; water will be evaporated by fire; air will consume the fire and merge back into ether; and ether will go back to God or the Lord, and there will be nothing but the Lord. So there is something to hold this whole universe together, to prevent dissolution, and you can give it any name. We call it Shabd or Nam. That is why I say that with the help of Shabd or Nam this whole world is moving. The Lord has created this universe with that Word, as you have read in the Bible, in the first chapter of John. It is through that Word of the Lord that He brought this whole universe into existence.

Q. 391. Will there ever be a time when souls advance enough to have a Golden Age? I have heard that when all souls are advanced there will be spiritual enlightenment on the earth?

A. So long as this universe exists, whatever spiritual advancement there may be, it will be only to a certain extent. If there were to be total spiritual advancement, this world would cease to exist. We would all go back and merge into Him. Nobody would be here. As long as creation is to exist, some souls have to stay in it, so spiritual advancement in this world can be only comparative. In some ages more people are thinking about the Lord and fewer people are devoted to the world. In other ages more people are material-minded and fewer are devoted to the Lord. But the real Golden Age will be only when we all go back up and merge into Him, and that will be only when He decides that there is no need for the existence of the whole universe.

Q. 392. Am I correct or do I have a misconception in thinking that we have certain karmic positions that are relative, say, to the

different reincarnations through which we travel, and that the teachings of Sant Mat affect that relationship of karma and reincarnation, in that some reincarnations can be avoided, say, because of following the teachings?

A. Sister, with those people with whom we have a relationship in this world, we may not have a relationship in the future world or in future incarnations, so there is no question of reviving karmic relationship at all. We are husband, wife, child, brother, sister, and so on, according to our karma. When we have played our part, we have no relationship with them; it is cut off completely, and it does not bother us.

Q. 393. I meant individuals. One individual soul involved with another individual soul?

A. When we are individually, spiritually advanced, we just cut off all ties with everybody and connect ourself with Him. We are kind and loving and render service to the best of our ability and according to our duty, but our attachment is with Him. We have severed our roots from the world and attached ourself to the Lord, so we are not attached to anybody else.

Q. 394. Why does this world exist in the first place? Is it that we must come here to learn these lessons? Why is there a world?

A. We are learning lessons if we remember what we have done before, so that we can avoid making the same mistakes. When we have forgotten what we have done in the past, what lesson can we be remembering? We are not learning any lessons. The world has to be like this, to a certain extent, as long as it is to exist. If we try to solve the problems of the world, we can never succeed. We can just rise above them.

Q. 395. But we have no consciousness of our past lives, the deeds we did. I cannot even remember that I was here in another life.

A. That is why I say, how can we learn from our past experience if we do not know what it was that we did?

Q. 396. From now on we can improve?

A. Yes, by doing the spiritual practice, our will power becomes strong and we are able to rise above this whole world rather than waste time in trying to analyze why we are here, why this misery, why these ups and downs.

Q. 397. Well, we are trying to satisfy our intellect before we start.

A. That is right. And intellect ultimately will bring you to this conclusion, that you have to rise above it. The intellect will advise you to cut the roots of attachments to this world. It can take you no farther. It only helps us to understand what we should do; but the release is gained only through spiritual practice.

Q. 398. There is also a rule of Kal that has to keep operating. If everybody became satsangis and went back to the Lord...?

A. Do not worry. Everybody is not destined to become a satsangi. Do not fear on behalf of Kal.

Q. 399. Since somebody has to remain to operate the world, why could it not be possible that the whole world could be liberated?

A. It is possible. The Lord can do anything and only He knows best.

Q. 400. If everybody went on that, there would not be any third grade or fourth grade, then those who entered the fourth grade would have no place to graduate to, would they?

A. We should have no worry. There is no dearth

of souls. We should have absolutely no worry. We should only worry about ourselves. As I said yesterday, if we try to pick up the thorns of the world we will never succeed. We have to wear strong shoes on our feet, the strong shoes of spiritual practice, then the thorns of the world will not affect us. So do not worry about solving the problems of others. Let us solve our own problems, for then only will we be in a position to help others.

13. DESTINY, KARMIC RELATIONS, FREE WILL, ATTACHMENT, COMING BACK, GOING DOWN, ADVERSITY, CHARITY, HELPING OTHERS/OURSELVES

Q. 401. Is it true that our life's destiny, the things that have and are to happen to us, had already been planned in advance? Is it the result of past karmas?

A. First, I will take your first question. What is destiny? Destiny is something with which we are born and which we have to face during our life's span. We call it Fate or Pralabdh karmas: another name for destiny. You know that we have three types of karma. Kriyaman karma is that which we do now, and for which we will have to pay in the future. That which we have done in a past life has become our destiny, our fate in this life. And then we have a store of karmas, which is called Sinchit. That is the accumulated reserve, because in every life it is not possible to pay for all that has been done in the previous life, so we have also collected a huge debt of reserve or Sinchit karmas, to which we have been adding in every life, for many ages. Supposing a man has killed a thousand chickens in one life. Naturally, in one more human form, he cannot pay for all these one thousand lives. So some of the account will still be left. In this way, in every birth, we have not been able to pay for what we have sown in the previous birth. Thus some huge stocks are left, which are known as stored or Sinchit karmas.

Unless all types of karmas are cleared, our soul cannot merge back into the Lord. So we have to face this destiny as the Will of the Lord. When you devote proper time to spiritual practice, you will

become so strong that you can smilingly and calmly face your destiny. You will not feel much of the ups and downs of the world, and you will be able to account for everything quite gracefully. It is difficult to say whether you will be able to change your destiny through spiritual practice, but you will definitely be able to face it gracefully, without losing much of your balance.

As to the Kriyaman karmas, every day when you are meditating, you remind yourself of your destination. You are trying to travel that Path. You are trying firmly to remain on the principles while traveling on that Path. Then, naturally, you will not be sowing any seed for the future, so you are making no new or Kriyaman karmas.

The Sanchit, store or residue of karmas can be burned only by meditation. When, with the help of Shabd, our mind goes back to its own origin, at which time the soul gets released from the mind, at that stage, all the karmas become ineffective, and in this way all of our karmas are cleared. Then only can the soul go back to the Lord.

So destiny is Pralabdh karma, which we also call fate. We are reaping what we have sown, and we also have the option of sowing for the future, but we can never differentiate whether we are reaping the old crop or sowing new seed. Therefore, with the best of intentions and to the best of our ability, we have to try to do only what is good. If then everything does not happen to our liking, we can presume that it is destiny. In the lower stages we can never know whether it is destiny or whether we have sown a new seed. After you cross the first stage, then only will you know what is your destiny and what you are sowing

for the future. We are living in our destiny, which we created in the past and we are creating our destiny for the next birth.

Q. 402. Is everything pre-ordained in this life?

A. This question is practically the same as the one discussed before. We have three types of karmas—Sinchit, Pralabdh and Kriyaman. What we call destiny or fate is known as Pralabdh karma. Whatever seeds we have sown in the past births, we are reaping some of that fruit now. This is our fate, our destiny, and cannot be changed. Destiny or fate is something with which you are born, which you are going to face during your life-span, and yet you have a certain amount of choice to sow new seeds. Then there are also the Sinchit, store or reserve karmas. In every birth we cannot pay or reap the fruit of all the seeds we have sown, so some of that is left, and gradually we pile a huge store of reserve karmas. Unless all types of karmas are washed away, are cleared, our soul cannot go back and merge into the Lord.

Definitely, we have fate or destiny, which we have to face in this life. That is why saints always advise us to face it, taking it to be the Will of the Lord. The Will of the Lord does not mean that the Lord has just arbitrarily written certain things for us to face in this world. They are only the fruits of some of our own seeds. sown in the past birth, which we are facing in this life. That is our fate, that is our destiny.

Q. 403. Is it possible for someone to change his karmas?

A. We cannot change the Pralabdh karmas, which

is our fate or our destiny. But by spiritual practice we can develop to such an extent that we are not much affected by those fate karmas. We go through them, but our will becomes so strong that we are able to rise above them to the extent that we can go through them gracefully, without too much upsetting our balance. They do not bother us. But we have to face all that. And, naturally, when we are meditating, we are in love with the Lord, His devotion is within us, we do not sow any new seed for which we have to come back to reap its fruit. And the Sinchit, which is all the store karma, is burned or washed away only by meditation.

Q. 404. What actually I mean is this: Should a human being leave everything to his destiny and not work? For example, if somebody is destined to be a doctor or an engineer, or it is written in his destiny that he is going to commit a murder, and if he thinks that he is going to do so, or he is going to become a doctor or an engineer, if it is written in his destiny, can he become a doctor even if he did not work for it?

A. When it is in his destiny to become a doctor, he will automatically work to be a doctor; otherwise, he will never become a doctor. We have to do, with our limited intelligence, what we think will be the best; but only that will happen which has to happen. We cannot think why we should do anything if it is already written in our destiny and we will get it automatically anyway. If a thing is in your destiny, then your way of thinking will be to develop it. We always have to do our best under all circumstances, and then naturally only that will happen as He wants it to happen. But we cannot excuse ourselves by taking shelter of not doing anything and letting the Lord do whatever He wants to do, because that is just another trick of the mind. For, in order to be able to act

according to the Will of the Lord, we have to be receptive, we have to submit ourselves to the Lord. And that we cannot do until we have controlled our mind and made it our own, as we cannot submit anything that does not belong us. As long as the ego is there, the 'I'-ness is there, we have to observe, we have to work; but only that will happen which He wants to happen.

We are all just like puppets who are dancing, and the strings are being pulled by Him according to our karmas. The realized souls and the unrealized souls are all dancing in the same way. The only difference is that the realized souls know that He is pulling the strings and the unrealized souls think that they are dancing by their own effort. So we have to act in this world with detachment to our role in life, knowing that He is pulling the strings and whatever is to happen will happen, but all the same doing our best under all circumstances. Thus we make ourselves receptive and become good puppets in His hands.

Q. 405. How much should free will affect us, and is it free will that causes us to have karma?

A. If we look at it on a grand scale, from the top down, we have hardly any free will at all. Take for instance, it was not in our power to be born in the United States, not within our power to be born in a particular family, under particular circumstances, under a particular atmosphere. All these things have shaped our way of thinking. So that has developed our mind, and our mind thinks in that direction now, keeping in view the background from which we have come. We may say that this is my decision, this is my free will, but we forget what has led us to make

that decision, to think in that direction. Have you followed my point? Supposing a person does not get the opportunity at all to get that type of education, to get that type of atmosphere, that good family background. His way of thinking will be absolutely different from another person's way of thinking, whose circumstances are different. So both of them may say, "I have free will". Actually, neither one has free will, because the atmosphere and the circumstances over which they had no control have influenced their thinking in different directions.

You are born in the States, another person is born in Russia. You are thinking in a different atmosphere, and he is thinking in a different way. Both of you say you have free will. Yet, if you happen to be born there and he is born here, still your way of thinking will not be identical. It will be different, according to the circumstances, the atmosphere, the environment. So, on a broader scale, we have absolutely no free will at all. Everything was planned, so to say. But, with our limited view, looking from here up, we have free will. Keeping in view the atmosphere and the circumstances, still we have a little free will and we have to make use of that free will. We cannot say that we are exactly free, as our way of thinking is moulded by so many circumstances—by our birth, by our karmic relations with certain people, by our being born in a certain country, by the atmosphere in which we get our education—all this influences our outlook and our way of thinking. We cannot say, absolutely, that we have free will.

Q. 406. Master, would you please explain regarding choice? How we are to know when we are making this choice, or when there is

a karmic result? When we make a choice, is it karma to do something we cannot help?

A. We cannot think from this point of view, that we should make a choice according to our karmic background. We cannot know what is our karma or what is in store for us. With our best efforts, honestly and sincerely, we should try to do our best and leave the results to the Lord. If it does not happen according to our best intentions and efforts, we should take it that this must be the will of the Lord. We should feel happy in that. We should never try to justify our choice by saying it is in my karma to do this. It is difficult for us to know what is the right choice, according to our karmic background. Karma will take care of our choice automatically. We need not try to analyze what is our karma or what is not our karma, for that will take care of itself.

Q. 407. Are we responsible for evil actions?

A. We are responsible in a sense that we have to pay for them. God does not make us do them. It is our mind that makes us do all that. In the Bible also it is stated that whatever you sow, so shall you reap. A farmer plants seeds in a field, and he reaps the fruit thereof when the crop matures. If he sowed chillies, he is bound to reap chillies; if he plants a mango tree, he is bound to get mango fruit. So this whole world is a karmic field, and whatever actions we do, whatever seeds we are sowing, we have to come back to reap the fruit thereof.

Q. 408. I should like your comment on the beneficence of adversity, scuh as pain, sorrow, sickness, suffering.

A. This whole world is full of misery, sorrow,

sickness. That is why we can never get everlasting happiness in this world. In fact, this human body, the top of the creation, the temple of the Living God, was bestowed on us due to both, our bad karmas and our good karmas. If we had only bad karmas, we would have been in hell. If we had only good karmas, we would have been in heaven. It is the combination of good and bad karmas which gives us the opportunity to be a in human body in this world. So the combination of good and bad has brought us here. And, while being in the body, we have to face the results of both, the bad and the good karmas.

Some people are fortunate in having more good karma and less bad karma; so, due to that, they have more happy days and fewer unhappy days. Others have more bad karma and less good karma, so they face more unhappy days and have fewer happy ones. But every human being in this world has moments of happiness and has also moments of sorrow. We will not find anyone in this world who has nothing but happiness and has not faced any sorrow; nor will we find anybody who has nothing but sorrow and never got relief or never had some happy moments in his life. This world is the field of good and bad karmas, where both, good and bad are harvested. Therefore, because we are in this world, we have to pay for our bad karmas also, and that is adversity.

I tried to explain in some of the meetings that saints never come into this world to make it a paradise or a heaven. They come only to take us from this place of adversity, to take us away from this place of good and bad, which is full of ups and downs, rich and poor, and the like. Their only purpose in coming is to take us back to the Lord. If we try to solve our

problems in the world we can never succeed; but the saints give us certain handles or levers, a way of meditation, through which we can always rise above these problems. If we try to pick up all the splinters of the world, we cannot succeed. But if we have strong shoes on our feet, they do not bother us at all. The Saints arm us with that meditation (the strong shoes), so that the ups and downs of the world do not bother us at all. We come to that stage, that level, where the worldly situation makes us neither happy nor unhappy. The real happiness we can get only when we merge back into the Lord. So, as long as we are in this world, we have to face ups and downs; sometimes we are rich, sometimes we are poor, sometimes we are happy, sometimes we are unhappy. But we should not lose our balance. We should always try to keep our thoughts in meditation. That is why saints advise us to remain in His Will.

What is His Will? To face these karmas gracefully and boldly, by keeping our attention in meditation. That is living in His Will. Why is it essential to remain in His Will? If due to our good karmas we give ourselves to the sensual pleasures and all worldly achievements, we forget the Lord. If due to our adversities, our bad karmas, we worry, we weep, we cry and are full of self-pity, our thoughts again get scattered in the world, so we can never meditate. Then when are we going to meditate, because good and bad will always be here as long as we are in this body? So the saints advise us that whether are we reaping the fruits of good karmas or of bad karmas, we should always keep our attention in the Lord. That is what we call *Bhana*. We have to remain in His Will. We have to be resigned unconditionally to His Will.

Whatever our store of karma is, good or bad, we have to go through it. But I can assure you that by meditation our will becomes so strong that these good and bad karmas do not affect us at all. We rise above the effects of good and bad karmas, and we easily and happily give the account of all these karmic debts with the help of meditation. And sometimes the Lord, out of His love and with His grace, helps to reduce this load of karmas, or rather to clear our karmas without taking full account of those karmas. So we should not lose our balance when we have to face some adversities or when we have to face the effects of some bad karmas. Rather, that is the occasion when we should give more time to meditation. We should give more time to devotion, our spiritual practice, so that the effect of that karma passes oft and we are again on our feet.

Q. 409. Master, the most helpful thing I have received from your lips is when you said, "You get only what you deserve".

A. What I mean by "we get only what we deserve" is that whatever we have done in the past, we have sown certain seeds to deserve what we are getting now. We reap what we have sown in the past, and now we deserve it. Therefore, we should always do those actions, of which we want to reap the desired results.

Q. 410. Will you please explain why certain people seem to be born with aversions to certain things? Like in my case, ever since I can remember, certain things bothered me very much until I was able to rise above them, almost without experiencing them, from the time I was very young?

A. This is what is called karmic reactions, karmic connections, karmic relations. Sometimes, we come

across people and we just like them for no rhyme or reason. Sometimes we just cannot pull together for no rhyme or reason. It is all due to karmic relations. Sometimes we do things without any intention or motive, just under impulse, and when we try to reason it, we have no reason for it. Yet we do it. Certain things we explain by karmic connections or past connections of a past birth.

Q. 411. If you have attachments to a certain country that you have never been in, with certain feelings that you do not understand, could you have been born in that country?

A. Either you were born in that country or you may be thinking that to be born in that country may be your ideal. Some people are fond of worldly achievements and worldly riches and all that and they are so envious and jealous of those people who have it that naturally those desires and cravings to have all those things may take them there. We take birth due to our karmas and due to desires which we create every day and which we cannot fulfill in this life; so we have to be born again to fulfill those desires. We may have karmic relations of a past birth in a different country, or we may have unfulfilled desires to go there.

Q. 412. Maharaj Ji, I know that there is no accidental death, but would you comment on that, such as when an airplane goes down and all the people are killed?

A. Brother, everything is destined. We will live only as long as is the span of life which our destiny holds for us. After that we have to leave this body, whether we leave it in a natural death, as it is called or an accidental death, if you want to call it that, or in a hospital or in any other way. We cannot live longer than what is destined for us.

Q. 413. Whether events be destined or not, one has to keep active or does it make any difference whatever? That is, since to act is to assume freedom of choice, it could not matter less whether events are destined or not destined? Judging from some of the questions, it seems to me that to speak of destiny as a kind of paying off of karmas and, at the same time, trying to decide how to act, somehow seems to complicate the issue. Since the individual must act, it does not matter what the destiny is?

A. With our best conscience, our best efforts, our best intentions, we should try to act and then leave the results to our destiny. We do not have the results in our hands. The results are in His hands. We should always try to do our best under the prevailing circumstances. Still, sometimes, in spite of our best efforts and sincerity, we do not achieve those results, while another person with even just a little effort achieves much better results. That is where destiny comes in. We should leave the results to destiny, to fate, to the Lord; but we must do our best according to the best of our ability.

Q. 414. It just seems that fate seems to operate too. What people say, "I am paying off karma", when it happens to be an event that they do not particularly like, or an event that is particularly fortunate?

A. Most of the things we say are just to justify our weaknesses, to justify our not having made any effort. That should not be the attitude at all.

Q. 415. To what extent is a person responsible to others, let us say, a husband or a father? To what extent is he responsible for a person's mental illness? For his wife or child? Whether he is responsible for the illness of the people with whom he lived, and will he be karmically responsible for their illness?

A. Brother, you are just to do your duty as a husband, as a son, as a friend, as a relative, and do whatever

possibly you can do for the other person, according to your role in that relationship, and not be affected mentally. Every one has to pay off his own karmic debt. Neither you are responsible for the other person nor is he responsible for you. We are each responsible for ourselves.

To the extent that we are related to each other, we are responsible to each other. That is a matter of duty. We have to do our duty by living in this world in whatever position the Lord has placed us, whether as a husband or a wife or a sister or a brother or any other relative or friend, and not be much affected by them, because ultimately, with the help of meditation or with the Sound practice, we have to detach ourselves from them. We are not to attach ourselves to them. And when you are detached from them, you will not be affected, whether or not they are mentally or physically ill. They have to pay for their own karmas. That does not mean that you are not to do your duty as a human being. You are to help them to the best of your ability. You have to help them, but not be affected by them.

Q. 416. In the case of people or children who are born with handicaps, cerebral palsy or mental retardation—if we try to talk to them or to educate them, are we interfering with their karma? Is it right for us to try to aid them, or should we not interfere?

A. Sister, the question of interfering with karma does not arise at all. It is the mother's duty to set a child right, to explain to him the right way to live in this world. One is actually failing in one's duty by not trying to teach that child what is wrong and what is right. When the mother does her duty to the best of her ability, and then she leaves everything to the

karmas, they will take care of themselves automatically. But we should not think that we are interfering with their karmas if we are trying to explain to them their disability, or the right way of life, and trying to help them in every way. We have to do our best to make them good and disciplined children, good citizens, to face life, and then leave it to the Lord. What comes out of them should be left to their karmas, after we have done our best to help them.

But we cannot justify our indifference under the garb of karmas. That attitude should not be there. In fact, we would be interfering with their karmas if we did not try to teach them and help them. We have learned by experience, by age and maturity, and it is our duty to impart the benefit of these experiences to them, even though we may sometimes have to be quite stern in disciplining them.

Q. 417. Maharaj Ji, if a soul's life is very short in this birth, would it return again? Why is it that life was cut short? Their karmic debt must have been very light, but does that mean that they have been initiated already and will not return any more, or will they have to come back in another life and pay off some more karmic debt, which they have not been able to pay off in this life?

A. Our span of life depends upon our karma, and if one dies at birth or at a very young age, it is because that was the fate allotted to that particular life. That does not mean that after having this human form, that soul goes back to the Lord. Even though that soul has had no opportunity to make new karma in this life, there is still the Sinchit or store or reserve load of karmas from which the fate of the next life is determined.

Our karma can take us down to a lower specie and our karma can also bring us back to the human form. It depends upon our attachments, our desires and cravings which we have not been able to fulfill or sublimate during the life span, the "seeds" which we have sown and have to come back to reap the fruit thereof. All this determines where we have to go, and it does not mean that if we die young, we must go back to the Lord. No, that is a wrong conception. It hardly makes any difference whether we die young or old. Our karma, our desires and our attachments determine where we have to go as well as the span of that life and whether to a lower species or whether to come back to the human form.

Without Initiation, without spiritual practice, nobody can get release from birth and death. Whether we die young or whether we die old, we have to pave our way, we have to travel on that Path, we have to reach a certain stage before we can get rid of this birth and death, and that we can do only by meditation. So it makes no difference whether we die young or old. Sometimes in our life-span we are reaping the fruit of what we have sown in the past, and sometimes we are sowing new seed, but we have to come back to reap again. Those who die young naturally get little chance to sow for the future; but all the same they may have reserve karmas, and they have to come back into this world in order to clear them.

Q. 418. Maharaj Ji, what is the meaning of a new-born baby that comes into this world and dies immediately? Would you please explain?

A. Sister, that is also due to karmic relationship with the mother, with the father, with the doctor, with the

world and with so many people. It was not in that baby's destiny to see life; yet he has had karmic relations with so many people in the world in the past, for which he has to come back into this world, but not to live here. This is all according to previous karmas. For example, when the mother has conceived, she has to go for help to so many people—the doctor, friends, relations, hospital, and so forth. That is all due to the karmic relationship of the child with those people, through the mother, through the father and through their friends, in addition to that relationship with the mother and father. That all has to be cleared and yet the child is not destined to live, so it dies at or soon after, birth.

Q. 419. If children are born with a special knowledge, they know more than the average child, and they grow up to be physicists or, let us say, great men, has it anything to do with their previous lives? What made them superior to the average person?

A. What we are and what we are going to be, naturally has something to do with our past life. That is what is known as destiny or fate. We bring it with us into this world. Destiny or fate is something with which we are born, which we are going to face in this life-span. Naturally, it has an association with our past life.

Q. In other words, it is true that there is something in his capacity from before that makes him superior, from a previous life?

A. Yes, that is right.

Q. 420. Do most American satsangis have past human lives in India?

A. It is difficult to say about Americans, or Indians, or from the East or West, but those in foreign countries usually have had some sort of association with some

Saint in a previous life that leads them to the Path in this life. Whether we are born in America, or in India, or anywhere else, it is certainly the accumulation of certain good karmas which really makes us deserving and marks us for the Path. It is not just by coincidence that we come to the Path or to a Master. We are led in that direction. Though we may think it is coincidence, it is as the effect of those karmas that we are automatically led to the Path. Wherever we may be born, ultimately our karma will bring us to the Path when that time comes.

Q. 421. Those of us who encounter seekers and lend them some Sant Mat literature, and they have experiences with saints but do not become initiated outwardly, what happens to them?

A. This is all due to *Sanskaras*, which means the fruit of actions in their past life. They have worked their way on the Path and ultimately they will be led to the Path again. Even though some satsangis, seekers, that is, the initiates or those who are to come to the Path, begin to have experiences much earlier, they do not realize what it is. They cannot understand. Sometimes they think that something is wrong with them. Actually, one who is to come to the Path is being guided right from the beginning. There are always visions here and there, to keep them straight. Many people have visions or certain inner experiences, even if they do not understand all that. The Lord has His own way of bringing people to the Path.

Q. 422. Who takes care of us before we are initiated?

A. The Lord, the Master, say anything, but it is that Power, the Shabd. When we come to the Path in this life, it may not be for the first time. We may

have some sort of association or we may have devoted a lot of time to the Lord in our previous birth. We may be deserving it, or in a previous life we may have met a Master and did not have faith or did not practise, and we had to come again for that purpose. Or, we may have covered a certain distance and have to start from there. It is difficult to analyze; but generally we have had past association with saints; we have met them; we created links with them and are drawn towards them.

Q. 423. Do I understand correctly that at a certain point in the unfoldment we are able to review all the past karma? If so, is it necessary, and/or is it of any advantage?

A. Sister, we do know about our whole past when we go beyond Trikuti, the second stage. When the soul gets released from the mind, your past will be crystal clear to you, as if you are looking in a glass. This is possible only when you go beyond the second stage, and then perhaps you will not be interested in knowing your past. You are rather looking ahead, and not at the back. You do not feel inclined to see what sins you have been committing, or what you have had to go through. You are not concerned. You do not bother, for you are looking ahead.

Q. 424. What is the reason for not remembering what has happened?

A. If you remember what has brought you back into this world, you will not repeat those mistakes. And that means you will never come back to this earth again, but will go back to the Lord. In that case, eventually everyone would do so, and the creation would come to an end. If we all know why

we are here, which bad habits or which bad karmas have brought us here, we will stop doing those bad karmas. Kal has received certain boons, prerogatives, certain advantages. That is why this whole universe is going on. One of the boons granted to him was that all creatures forget their past. Another was that wherever we take birth, we like those surroundings. There are others about which you have read in *Spiritual Gems*. Those boons to Kal are essential for the continuance of this universe. Otherwise, nobody would commit sin, and nobody would do all these things again if they knew why they are being punished, why they are here. The universe would come to an end. Since the Lord wants this universe to go on, naturally we have to forget all that has happened in our previous lives, for which we are here now.

Q. 425. When we seem to be drawn into helping people, how can we tell if we are paying off past karmas or building new karma?

A. That question was also brought up before. It is very difficult to know whether we are reaping what we have sown or whether we are sowing. We, by meditation, develop ourselves to that extent that after a certain stage we know that this is due to our past and this is new seed that we are sowing in. So, what we can do is to always try to do good to the best of our ability; but if it happens the other way, we can take it that this is due to our past karmas. This is just a crude way of discriminating it.

Q. 426. If we do something for someone and it turns out badly, and we find out that we were wrong and were truly sorry, does that rectify anything?

A. That is what I tried to explain to you just now.

We should, honestly, with the best of intentions, try always to do good. Then if it turns out differently, we should not worry. We should take it as our Pralabdh karma, fate or destiny. There is nothing to rectify it. The thing that had to happen, has happened. Our conscience is clear. We have not done it knowingly. But we should not try to justify such weaknesses. When we are honest in our efforts to do good, then it is up to the Lord to take care of it. We cannot help it if it takes another shape.

Q. 427. It is written in the books that it is impossible for us to understand karma entirely until we reach the first region.

A. Yes, it is not possible for you to know due to what karma you have to get this and due to what karma you got that. You cannot discriminate whether it is a new seed or whether you are reaping the fruit of the old seed. That is what I say, at this stage it is not possible for us to differentiate, so we should take an objective view, a practical view. We should try to do good and then leave the results to the Lord.

Q. 428. Astrologers claim that when one is born in a certain month of the year, one is given a certain type of life and guaranteed a certain way of living. Is it true or not?

A. If you know what is going to happen to you, what difference will it make? Nothing can be changed. We will have to face what is in our destiny. So, why add to our agony by knowing beforehand what we are going to face? If one is told that he is going to have an accident, two years before it is to happen, he lives in anxiety and agony for two years; whereas if he did not know in advance, it may have bothered him for perhaps only two or three hours.

What is the use of it all? Even if we know beforehand, that does not help us in any way. Astrology is a definite science, but very few have mastered it, so mostly their predictions are not correct. But one should not dabble in these things. Whatever has to come, will come, so why bother about it?

Q. 429. Is there any karma created when satsangis who are neighbours share rides and exchange driving their cars? Also to go out to dinner together and wonder who paid last, and so forth?

A. (Laughter) That is just like asking, when we breathe, do we add to our karmas? I do not think we should analyze these things to that extent. In love there is nothing of the sort. We should not analyze these petty things.

Q. 430. Master, do you believe that all things have seeds—that the law is an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth? Is not this the karmic law—God's law—that we give a karma for everything that we do? Is it an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth?

A. Sister, what Jesus meant to tell us is that we should not be revengeful in our heart. If somebody should take our eye, we should not think that we should also take out his eye. Rather, we should give him love, affection. If he slaps you on one side, then put the other side before him. "Love thy neighbor", "Love one another", that is what the teaching is. It is the teaching of peace and love, and certainly not of hatred and revenge.

When that love comes in you, then you do not have any ill-feeling against anybody. Unless your heart is pure, you will not be receptive to His grace. That is what Christ says. When you are praying to the Lord, if you have not forgiven someone, you must first forgive him. Then only will you get forgive-

ness from the Lord. That means that your heart must be pure when you pray. Your heart must be receptive when you pray, and it will be receptive only when it is pure, when it is unconscious of the world. If you are carrying a grudge against anyone or have hatred in your heart, it is not pure, as its tendencies are always downward. Then you cannot receive what He wants to give you. So, if we have no ill-feeling against anybody for all their hurts, we have become pure and receptive; and we receive His grace, His love. There is no hatred left in us when His love comes in. A heart full of love has no room for hatred.

Q. 431. Then God Himself does not forgive us if, for every action He sends us a karma—for every action that we do?

A. No, sister, I tell you the Lord is all love, He is all grace. We do not know nor can we comprehend what His grace and love is. But if we are not good children, we have to pay for it. For example, if a child does not obey his mother, or tries to hurt somebody, if she cannot correct him by reasoning with him, she disciplines him. Not because she does not love him, but because she wants to set him right, to make him a good boy. Similarly, the Lord is just love, but we have to be receptive, we have to obey the laws of nature, we have to live as good citizens in this world. But if we are naughty and we are not rightly behaving, He will punish us. That does not mean that He has started hating us. We have to be set right, and He has set up certain agencies which take care of all these things. But He is all love.

Q. 432. I believe the discourse said that we are fortunate to be in this human form, because this is the jumping-off place—from

here we can go up or we can fall back down—but that once we lose it, we might have difficulty in getting back to it. Perhaps this is clearer to some people than it is to me, but I do not understand if there is a reincarnation, would this reincarnation perhaps be in some other form because of the karma that was accrued in this life?

A. If we do not make the best use of this human form, we can be sent back into a lower species. It is our attachments, our unfulfilled low desires, longings, cravings and our karmas coupled together which take us back to the lower species. We are sent back into those forms or to those places where we can satisfy those unfulfilled cravings and desires, and can give an account for our karmas, for what we are doing now. We have got to make our way up; otherwise we can be sent down. The Lord does not find excuses to send us down. He gives us a fair chance to make the best use of this human form. If we are really sincere and we do not want to come back, He does not send us back. We will get opportunity after opportunity to improve ourselves, to make the best use of this human form. But unless we make our way up, we cannot escape from births and deaths. We can be sent back. That is why we have got to make the best use of this form, at this time.

After a fruit drops from a tree, it is very difficult, if not impossible to put it back on the branch again. Similarly, if we lose this opportunity now, we may find it very difficult to get such an opportunity again. We should try to make the best use of this opportunity which He has given us. You have several references in the Bible to the effect that we have to face our destiny in this world. That destiny is something which we bring with us into this world and which we

have to face during this lifetime. It is the same as fate, or what we call Pralabdh karma.

Q. 433. Perhaps this is the source of the problem for me, because if we are born with this destiny, then it seems to me that the karmas we are accruing while we are here may be things that are beyond our control of this destiny?

A. That is right. Some of these things are beyond our control.

Q. 434. Maharaj Ji, is it possible to have unconscious attachments without really realizing it?

A. Sometimes we are not aware of our attachments. We feel that we are detached, but when the situation arises, we realize how much we are attached. Our present attachments as well as our previous attachments can bring us back to this earth, because unless all our karmas, unless all our attachments are loosened, we cannot go up. We are now thinking about these present attachments. We may have some previous attachments of past births, which may still be strong and for which we may still have to give an account. They may even pull us back to this world.

Q. Even if we do make progress?

A. Even if we do make progress. But we will, of course, go ahead, not backwards. We will be born in much better circumstances where we can clear our karmic accounts in a much better way. Once we make a start, we will always go ahead, not backward at all. There are no failures in Sant Mat. We just go ahead. But unless our attachments are loosened, we cannot go back Home. And meditation takes care of our previous attachments also. When we think that

we are not making progress. We do not know actually what progress we are making. We do not know unless that last little remaining veil is pierced through, even as to what is left to be pierced from the other side of the wall. We all have a store of karmas from previous births, and unless we clear those karmas as well as our fate karma and do not sow for the future, how can we go back?

Meditation takes care of all those stores of karmas. By meditating we are loosening those attachments, and when they are being cleared, sometimes in meditation we see many types of faces coming before us of gents and ladies, moving about. We do not know who they are. Those are our previous relations, our previous attachments. We are not to pay any attention to them. We are just to keep ourselves in meditation. Automatically they will cease to come before us Their accounts with us are being cleared in this way. We are getting detached from them, and then we can go ahead. Meditation takes care of all these things. Only if we still have very strong attachments left at the time of death, then we are brought back into this world to clear them. Otherwise, even though we have not made much progress, we can continue making progress and go up from some intermediate stage, and can thus be saved from birth and death in any way. Yet, it may be a long way to reach back to Him.

Q. 435. I understand that for those initiates and satsangis there is also, shall we say, after death, a certain amount of grace that will be given to the loved and dear ones of satsangis. Is this true? In other words, mothers for instance, even though they did not at the time of their incarnation here, receive Initiation?

A. Brother, it is again the question of attachment. When we are attached to the Word, the Shabd, the Master, we have His love and devotion within us—we are attached to the Lord. Our attachment will take us to the Master who is merged into the Lord, so we will merge into the Lord along with the Master, in His Love, in His devotion. If our friends and relatives are attached to us and we are attached to something much stronger than to what they are attached, their attachment will eventually take them to the Lord.

If we are on the Path and are attached to the Master through spiritual practice, it will help them to be attached to us, because they have to come where we are as they are attached to us and we are attached to the Lord. So they, in turn, will also be attached to the Lord, because their attachment to us creates such a karmic relation that they will ultimately find themselves on the Path and come back to us, where we are. If, on the other hand, you are not attached to the Lord through Shabd or Nam, but you are attached to them, then your attachment cannot help them.

We can help our relatives and our friends only when we are attached to the Sound inside. When we are attached to the Master and to the Word inside, then we will help them also. But if their attachment to us makes us forget our destination, our Path, our devotion to the Shabd or Nam, then we will be driven back to them. If you are attached to a bulldozer and you are holding the chain of a dog, the bulldozer will pull you and the dog along with you. However, if you are not attached to the bulldozer, but you are holding a very strong dog, he will pull you back. Similarly, we always help our friends and relatives by meditation, by attaching ourselves to the Sound, and

by detaching ourselves from them. Their attachment will bring them to us, our attachment will take us to the Lord. So, we are also gradually putting them on the Path and, eventually, we all will reach the same destination.

Q. 436. Regarding animals and our relations to them. Is it detrimental to our own progress to have affection for an individual animal? One satsangi has pointed out that if you enjoy pets you are retrograding to the level of the animal. Does that not also work in the opposite way?

A. Sister, it depends upon the attachment. If you are attached to an animal, naturally, it will pull you down. If the animal is attached to you and you are not attached to the animal, but you are attached to something much better than the animal, then you may pull that animal up. If we are meditating, we are attached to that Sound so strongly that it is pulling us, and if the animal is attached to us, we will also pull him along with us. If we are not attached to the Sound but to something else, whether man or animal, and he is pulling we will be pulled down. If a dog is very strong and you have his chain in your hand, he will pull you, but if you are stronger, you will pull him.

All this depends upon the chains of attachment. If we are too much attached to those things, and we ourselves have nothing to hold onto that is stronger than that attachment, then naturally we will be pulled down. If we are tied to something much stronger than these pets and all that, we will pull them to us, ultimately. It is all a matter of attachment.

Q. 437. Master, speaking about attachment, is it attachments at the conscious level that bind us here or is it possible to have an attachment at the sub-conscious level?

A. Sometimes we have attachments at the subconscious level too, of which we are not aware, and we realize those attachments only when we have to face certain situations. But attachments at the conscious level are very clear.

Q. 438. Is it possible to rise to some level where you can negotiate with the mind and these attachments and balance them without actually having to live through the karama? As an example, if a man in his normal span had to live three lives, could he reach a certain level and negotiate with the mind and balance these karmas without actually having to live the three lives? Does one physically have to go through the karma, or can one balance the karma mentally at some higher region?

A. We can always burn our karmas. They can always be destroyed. That is the purpose of meditation; otherwise, we would have taken hundreds of lives to fulfill those karmas. But by meditation it can be done in one, or two, or three lives—and four at the most. The object of meditation is to destroy those karmas, to clear those karmas. Kabir says that if you have a big stack of hay, it takes only one match to burn the whole lot. Similarly, one little portion of Nam or Shabd, an atom of it, burns thousands and millions of our karmas. We actually burn or destroy and rise above them, and do not make new ones in the process. These old karmas have relations with our mind. When, with the help of Nam or Shabd, our mind goes back to its origin, these karmas just drop down. However rusty a knife may be, if you hold it against a revolving grindstone, all the rust is removed. The knife again shines like new. It becomes pure. That is the condition of the soul when it leaves the mind after coming in touch with the Nam or Shabd.

Q. 439. Maharaj Ji, can you tell us how we can love our family and fellow men without feeling or being attached to them? How can we love them and at the same time be detached from them?

A. Sister, when we love everybody, we are not attached to anybody. By loving everybody, we mean loving that Power which is in everybody, and not just in certain individuals or in one particular person or creature. We should not try to justify our weaknesses by saying that we are loving His creation. I shall tell you a little portion of a mystic's example, written in his lifetime. He was going down the street, followed by some of his disciples. He always used to remain in devotion and love of the Lord, in his own mood. As they were walking, a dancing girl came happily dancing towards them in the street, in her lax manner, and he just kissed her and said, "Oh, how beautiful is the Lord". Because the Master kissed her, his disciples also kissed her and said, "Oh, how beautiful is the Lord". The Master saw that. As he went a little farther, he saw a blacksmith hammering a molten hot plate. The Master went up to that hot plate and kissed it and said, "Oh, how beautiful is the Lord", but the disciples held back. Then he said to them, "Where is your love for the Lord?" Sometimes we just try to justify our weaknesses in this way and we say that we are not loving the person, we are just loving the Lord in that person. For everybody, the real attachment should be Nam or Shabd, for that alone attaches us to the Lord.

Q. 440. Is there such a thing as negative attachment to people whom one dislikes so intensely? Will that bring them back to that situation again?

A. Do you mean hatred?

Q. A negative attachment. We talk about attachment to things we love, but is there such a thing as negative attachment?

A. Hatred is another form of love. When we hate anybody, we are actually in love with him; otherwise, we will never hate him. How could others affect us if we were not concerned about them, if we did not bother about them, if we never thought about them? When you hate a person, you are always thinking about that person. You cannot drive that man out of your mind, you hate him so much. You are not analyzing yourself, for actually you are in love with him. You have not been able to make him according to your wishes, so you hate him; but all the time you are in love with him or you would not even be thinking about him. We have to drive that feeling out of us. We are just to forget all about it. Then the question of hatred does not arise in us. By hating anybody, we are attaching ourself to him.

Q. 441. Why would the soul want to come back here from the superior planes, knowing how much suffering and misery is here? Why would the soul want to come down again as an individual? Why would the soul want to come back at all?

A. Even now, we do not want to go. We see suffering all around us. If anyone tells you to prepare yourself, you are going to die, are you prepared to die at once? We say, "No, we have so many things to do yet". Even now we are not prepared to leave, in spite of all the sufferings in this world. We may think we are prepared to die, but realize that we are not, when faced with the situation. The Great Master used to relate to us a very humorous story: There was an old lady whose daughter was very ill, and she was praying to the Lord, "O Lord! Please

take away my life. I cannot bear to see the suffering of this poor girl. Let her live. I want to die in her place." Just then a black buffalo came and took some food from a small black utensil which was in the courtyard. As the buffalo put its mouth in the utensil to get the food, its horns got stuck in the utensil and when it raised its head, just then the old lady looked out and all she could see was something black running towards her. So when that buffalo, running about in fright with the bucket covering its eyes, approached that old mother, she thought that the angel of death had come, and at once she said, "My daughter is in that room".

We may say that we are ready, but when the situation arises, then we know where we stand. Knowing that we are weeping and suffering, knowing that we must have done something in our past birth that we are so miserable and unhappy, still we are not doing anything to get rid of this condition. We are doing the same things again and again. We are not taking lessons from what deeds we have done in the past birth, for which we are suffering now. We are victims of the senses, just the same as we used to be. We are still doing the same things every day, in our human life. How can we go back Home? We will have to come back here. We are not taking any lessons at all from the past. Nobody does. When the situation arises we do the same thing, and we are again sorry. We repent for what we have done, but when again the situation arises, we do the same thing, and we are again sorry. If this is so in this life, what about our past life? We have forgotten the reason why we are unhappy, and so we are doing, perhaps, the same thing, sowing the same seed every day in our life.

Q. 442. Master, do you believe in retrogression, degeneration of a soul into an animal?

A. Yes, why not? Our own karma also decides that. According to the karma theory, man can merge back into his Source, the Lord from whom he originally came, and he can also go back into a lower species, such as an animal or even below that, to which he may have descended in a previous life and came up to the status of a human being again. The Lord does not find excuses to send us back. He gives us opportunity after opportunity to improve, to go ahead. But if we refuse to make use of this opportunity, we can go back. Our attachments, our unfulfilled desires, our karmas can pull us down. We do not like to think so, but that is a fact.

Q. 443. Master, in other words, if a man acts like a beast he may have to come back as a beast?

A. He may have been a beast in his last life and is still carrying all those instincts in him. Or, he may come back again as a beast. Why not?

Q. 444. Sir, what is the last step of the ladder in the animal kingdom just below the human status?

A. There are so many species in the same category that one cannot name a particular animal. In the class containing the four elements come the four-legged animals, which could be a cow, a horse, an ox, an elephant or any four-legged animal. They are all in the category which is the next one lower than human.

Q. 445. Regarding the different incarnations and we may have to go through before we can get back to the Father, the Infinite Ocean

of Love, I believe that those who are really seeking shall never have to come back again. Is that true?

A. It is the attachment which brings us back, and as long as we are attached to worldly objects and worldly possessions and things, we have to come back here. We have to detach ourselves from them and attach ourselves to the Lord. Then only we will go back to Him. It is through the mind that we are attached to the senses and the worldly pleasures. So we have to detach our mind from the senses and the worldly pleasures and attach it to the devotion of the Lord. The Audible Life Stream or Sound Current, whatever you may call it, reverberates within everyone of us here, at the eye center. We have to concentrate our attention back up to the eye center, the thinking center, which is the seat of the mind and the soul knotted together. From here our mind is pulled down through the nine apertures of the body, by the five senses. So unless we withdraw our attention back up to this point, the eye center, we are not capable of treading this Path. Our real spiritual journey begins from here onwards, so we must have something to hold our attention here, and we must have something to pull us back on that Path. With the help of Simran and Dhyan we withdraw up to this point and concentrate, to contact the Sound that is reverberating there. And when we are attached to that Sound, we are automatically detached from the senses and automatically detached from the worldly objects. This is the whole principle of Sant Mat. If we try to fight with the mind in order to detach ourselves from the worldly things, we can never succeed. So, in order to overcome our mind, to subdue it and to take it back to its own origin, we

have to give it a pleasure which is greater than the sensual pleasures. And that superior pleasure, the Shabd, the Sound Current, is right here at the eye center in every one of us. It is here that we have to attach ourselves to that Sound.

Q. 446. In other words, we have to be in love with God before we can detach ourselves from this world?

A. Yes. For example, if you try to stop a flowing river by building a dam, how long can you hold the water? Perhaps a few days. But when the accumulation of water is too great, the dam will break and the pressure will be so great that the water will even flow over the banks, and do more damage. But if you put in a dam and also divert the direction of the flow of the water into a different channel, the dam will be useful and permanent, and the water will flow in a different direction. Similarly, we have to withdraw our scattered thoughts to this point and divert the direction of the mind inwards, with the help of the Shabd. When the tendency of the mind is inward and upward, naturally it does not come down to the senses. It is still the same mind, whether we pull it up or take it down.

Q. 447. Is it ever necessary for a satsangi to reincarnate into animal form? That is, one who has been initiated by a true Master?

A. Even if his karma was bad, he will not be sent lower than the human birth. It is not necessary for that soul to come back into the animal form. We do not come down! We go up? Such a person may get another human form and in that form he will have to go through all those bad karmas, but he will not go down into a lower species.

Q. 448. If people do wrong, do they not come back as animal?

A. Not initiates. Of course, otherwise, one has to come back according to his karma, into whatever species our karma designates. But you had asked whether it was "necessary" for a satsangi. It is not necessary. He can improve right from there.

Q. 449. Maharaj Ji, when does a sould enter a body? Directly after birth, or before?

A. When the life enters the child, it is the same thing. Some call it life, we call it soul. Without the specific order from the Lord or intention of the Lord, no soul will go into any body at all. Every soul that comes is marked for a particular relationship which brings it here. Actually the soul comes at the time of conception. It comes, but is inactive, and it becomes active after the third month.

Q. 450. The world is a place in which we learn. Do you think that is called karma?

A. What do we learn in this world? To feel unhappy? To be a part of this agony? What are we learning? What advantage are we taking now from our experiences in our previous births? Do we remember them? Are we not repeating the same mistakes which we repeated in our last birth? How much have we learned from those mistakes? Nothing. So how are we learning? We are just reaping the fruit of what we have sown. We even do not learn from our mistakes in this life, not to speak of our past lives. This world is a field of karmas. Whatever we have sown, we reap, and whatever we sow now, we reap here in the future. We have come here again and again to fulfill those desires, to reap the fruit of

the seeds that we have sown in our previous births, and while reaping we also sow for the next birth, and the excess also increases our stored lot. That is karma.

Q. 451. After one has reached a civilized human level, is it possible for the consciousness to lose all of this and to be born again as a monkey, or something of lesser consciousness?

A. I do not think this modern civilization has made us better humans. Certainly I do not agree with you. Compare ancient history with modern civilization and you cannot say that we do not fight now, or that there are no bad habits in us, or that we do not slander anybody, we do not murder anybody. First, people used to fight with swords, with their hands; now with one bomb you kill thousands. I do not consider that modern civilization has made us better humans at all. We do not have better human qualities because of this civilization. The object of civilization and of better standard of living is to make us happy. That should be the main criterion of civilization—health and happiness. You cannot say that we are happier and healthier than our forefathers were. They were living just under the shade of a tree, but perhaps were much healthier and happier than with all this steel and concrete, where we are prisoners now.

Q. 452. I would like to understand your logic, Sir, but I am overwhelmed by the number of humans, with intellect equal to my own, who prefer the modern progress to the old-fashioned peace and happiness.

A. That is what I say; but it is for us to think whether we are improving or are going down. I do not say that they do not prefer it. Everybody likes to be a better human, but whether we are or have

become better humans or not, that is what we have to find out. I think the day will come when we will realize that we have to say goodbye to this modern civilization and we will have to go back to the natural way of life to get more peace and better health. I think that consciousness is coming within every one of us that we have reached the top, and now, we feel disillusioned with this civilization. With all this material achievement to our credit, are we happier than before, healthier than before? Rather, we are so frustrated that it is agony for anyone to analyze one's self.

Q. 453. But I also think that more people are now aware of mysticism or spirituality than in olden times?

A. That is right. You can give credit to the modern civilization for this because this modern civilization has made us more frustrated and unhappy. So we try to seek peace and lean more towards mysticism, more towards spirituality. In this way you can give modern civilization credit, as it is the cause of our seeking real happiness now.

13 (i). KARMA

Q. 454. Can Kal keep one from going back to the Lord, once he has been initiated by the Master?

A. No.

Q. 455. And the time of going back has been decided?

A. Well, from a higher scale it may have been decided, but we try to take shelter under the pretext that since it has been decided for us, we need not bother to meditate. But it has also been decided that we should make the effort.

Q. 446. Well, say I passed on from this body tonight, and I am not very far along on the path, would I continue to meditate wherever I go?

A. When you leave the body at the time of death, you have nothing to worry about. Death simply means separation of the mind and soul from the body.

Q. 457. Wherever I go my soul goes?

A. The soul is the real 'you', and your soul goes according to your karma.

Q. 458. And will I still remember Initiation and these teachings?

A. If you come back into this world, you will not remember. As a human being, you will forget as soon as you take another birth. But if you do not have to come back and go to some higher stages, you will remember, of course.

Q. 459. And one can help this through meditation here now?

A. Meditation is meant for this purpose, that we go high and do not have to come back to this life again.

Q. 460. .....the temptation, the devil?

A. Temptations are given by the devil, Kal or Satan, whatever name you may give it, because Kal does not want us to go beyond his reach. Therefore, all sorts of temptations are put in our way just to act as a block in our progress.

Q. 461. Maharaj Ji, once we have been initiated we never lose our association with our Master, do we?

A. No, no.

Q. 462. In our association with animals, can we help their progress? The animals we have, the animals we love, when they die, do they come back because we help them to come towards the Path?

A. If a dog is attached to you, you will pull him up provided you are attached to something higher, which will not let you go down; but if you are attached to the dog, you will go to the dog. Actually, it is our attachments that bring us back. If the initiate is attached to the Master, he is bound to go up and merge into the Master, and if the dog is attached to that initiate, naturally the dog, after re-incarnating as a human, also comes on the Path and gradually travels upwards because of his attachment to his Master.

Q. 463. You mean once we are initiated, we are always making progress? We are never sliding back even though—?

A. We are always going ahead, never downward.

Q. Never back further than we were before?

A. That is right.

Q. 464. About injustices and merciless treatment, how can you tell whether what happened was an injustice or whether that person was not better off having been killed, or perhaps staying in the

concentration camp was the means for him to come to the Path? I do not think at our stage of development our vision is broad enough to tell us whether a thing is for our own benefit? It may seem to be for our benefit and it can be very detrimental to us?

A. The thing is that we can only know whether justice has been done to us or injustice has been done to us if we know what we had done in the past. If we can know what we have sown and what we are reaping now, then only we can determine the difference.

Q. 465. When you did something bad and you know you did something bad, you have a bad conscience and feel guilty. But when you do not feel any problem at all and all of a sudden somebody cuts your head off?

A. As you sow, so shall you reap. That is what it proves.

Q. 466. The individual has no idea of what he did?

A. That is right. He does not know. We are meditating and trying to know what we have sown.

Q. 467. Is not the argument the same, like last week forty-four people got killed in an airplane and as long as we do not know them as long as we were not attached....?

A. That is right. Not to say of that, thousands of insects are killed under our feet every day. When we are breathing, God knows how many souls we are depriving of life. We feel affected only by our own friends and relatives, because we are attached to them. But everything belongs to the Lord, so if we analyze like that, we are led nowhere. Whatever we think, we do not know whether there is justice or injustice. To us, with our limited intellect, it looks like injustice because in our presence these poor souls never did

anything wrong, for which they have been killed. But ours is a limited vision. We do not know what they have done in their past lives, whether an old debt has been paid or a new seed has been sown. Until we have reached that stage where we can know, He alone knows, as far as we are concerned.

Q. 468. So actually there is no injustice, ever?

A. These are the fruits of karma. As we sow, so shall we reap.

Q. 469. And is it not that some people in groups, like in an airplane, all taking the same trip, their time calls for being beheaded or killed, and when it comes, they go in groups?

A. That is right. They have some associations from the past, that is the reason they all have to die together; or that some are killed and others survive. It is all karma.

Q. 470. May I ask what makes one human being comprehend much better than another human being comprehends? When you talk to some human beings, they just look blank, while others comprehend very easily.

A. Their karmas. Call it their destiny or their fate; it is the same thing.

Q. 471. Is this also the reason that in a dream we might see ahead, things which will happen? Does fate sometimes give us a window to see ahead?

A. Sometimes in dreams we know what is going to happen to us. That is right.

Q. 472. All through science we have the principle of cause and effect. Is this also an explanation of karma?

A. That is right. Whether we call it karma, cause and effect, or action and reaction, it is the same thing with a different name. Karma, nobody can escape, whether one believes in it or not.

14. CODE OF CONDUCT, SOCIAL RELATIONS

Q. 473. I meet a lot of people who, I think, are very spiritual, I feel very good around them, and they are not satsangis. Still I feel that they are better satsangis than I am. Why are they not satsangis?

A. That is right. Every good person is not necessarily a satsangi. Some people were so nice and sincere in their last life and have been so good to people that they are getting the reward of their good karma.

Q. But these people who are so good and so nice, they may be living out their good karma from their past life, but they are also sowing and seeding good karma for the next life, and I thought—?

A. That is right, so they will get its fruit again, but all the same, they will remain in the cycle.

Q. 474. If I am living out my bad karmas and I am being not as nice as they are, then I will have to come back?

A. Then you should try to be like them. (Laughter)

Q. 475. Well, I think they may be getting...?

A. They will definitely get the advantage. They may come on the Path if they are very sincere in their desire to meet the Lord. When we have a strong desire to meet the Lord and we have real devotion, even if we do not know the Path, even if we do not know how to meditate, how to pray for His grace, then the onus is on the Lord to put us on the Path. Our duty is to have a genuine yearning to meet Him. Then we automatically behave in such a way that we find ourselves on the Path leading towards Him. That is why it is mentioned in the discourse that you have just heard that only by the grace of the Lord

can we meet the Master, and only through the Lord's grace are we on the Path. We, by ourselves, can never do anything; but if we are really sincere and honest in our search, then, if not now, sometime in the future, it will be for the Lord's grace to put us on the Path. As Christ said, "Not I, but the Father in me doeth all things"

Q. 476. Why does our ability to do our Bhajan and to follow the principles of Sant Mat vary so much? Sometimes one goes from one feeling, like one is very capable of doing meditation—and then, for some unexplainable reason, one just cannot do it?

A. Ups and downs do come everywhere.

Q. 477. Shall we suffer through it, or shall we feel guilty, or—?

A. We should never feel guilty at all. We simply should try to put more time in meditation and get through those ugly days.

Q. 478. But . . . depressing . . . . unsuccessful?

A. And then to go back to what you said about many people being very nice, though not being satsangis, satsangis probably try to analyze themselves too much, thinking that they have too many bad qualities in them.

If this room is filled with darkness, you do not know how much that darkness covers up; but if a little ray of light comes in, you know instantly that this whole room is filled with small particles. Similarly, when we do not know about or are not on the Path, we are not aware of our bad points. Rather, we take pride in our habits. But when we are on the Path, that ray of light comes within us. Then we

analyze ourselves and find that we have many very bad habits. In fact, the bad habits were there before, but now we are in a position to analyze them, to realize them. So we feel a little guilty about them. Actually, it is a sign that we are improving, because this consciousness has come in us to discriminate what is good and what is bad. That light of discrimination has come in us to show that we are really bad and we are to get rid of these bad habits. Before that, we never knew it and we even took pride in these things. So, one should not feel guilty about it. Rather, we should try to know our weaknesses and then do our best to overcome them.

I always say, when we are conscious of our faults, half the battle is won, because then we begin to do something, about them. But when we are unaware of our faults, we delude ourselves into thinking that what we are doing is right, which causes us to travel still farther in the opposite direction. We should therefore be grateful that the Lord's grace is enabling us to avoid these pitfalls and travel straight on the Path leading back to Him.

Q. 479. Maharaj Ji, what brings us to the Path except the grace of the Lord in the sense that nice people doing good for others keep coming back into this world and continue to do good for others, even though they may do it in a pleasant life? But some of us find this desire for the Lord and this yearning. What have we done to deserve it? It something we have done that the Lord gives us this grace, or are we just lucky?

A. No, no. We have earned it. We have earned it in the sense that we have been very honest in our efforts to meet the Lord, whether we have been trying in a wrong way or in a right way, the longing, the real yearning to meet Him was within us. In

whatever way we worship the Lord, that helps us in getting His grace, and He will put us on the Path.

Q. 480. Do you think it is a satisfaction we have gotten—external things have to—this longing—if we were happy?

A. Whatever the reason may be, there are two ways of coming to the Lord. One is because we have longed to meet Him; another is because we are tired of the world and we want an escape in His love. Some lucky people instinctively love Him. They worship Him only because they want to meet Him. They have no other motive or desire. Other people are being driven to Him because they are completely tired of this world. They want an escape into His love and devotion. Both are all right, but the degree of love in the first type cannot be compared with anything else, as that is the superior type of love.

Q. 481. Maharaj Ji, sometimes we have been asked, what about people who feel that they have a job to do in the world for other people—to be of help—not necessarily as their profession, but the desire to be helpful? How does this fit into Sant Mat?

A. Sister, we should always try to be helpful to others. We should not help from the point of view that some day they will also help us. We should help without any intention of getting reward. Generally, what we try to do with the missionary spirit is that if we will be helpful to the other people now, then either later in this life or in the next life they will be helpful to us. That attitude is not correct, for then we are sowing the seed to return to this world in order to get the reward of what we have done for them. We should be helpful to the public, helpful to society, helpful to everybody in whatever way we can. All

this should be done with a detached mind.

It should be remembered that we need also to help ourselves in order to be in a position to help others. If actually we do not help ourselves but try to help others, we are deceiving ourselves and we are deceiving others. So first we must help ourselves and then we should help others.

Q. 482. Something still bothers me mentally. I came originally from Europe. In Europe there were twenty million persons who had to give their lives, innocently—some very fast and some by slow torture—seemingly for no reason except because they were born in a different religion. I think you are familiar with that. They have been herded into concentration camps, gassed and killed. How can I face my God and say, why did you do a thing like this? To us people down here it looks like a terrific injustice to kill people just like cockroaches.

A. Who is killing? It is the people who are killing each other.

Q. 483. Because God has power over His children even when they say, "Why did you produce me?" I would say you are not being produced by me but by the Almighty, and because you behaved like that, when he hits you back, you feel it. Now stop hitting him, and there will be no such reaction. Now why did somebody not stop all this slaughter in Europe? All these wars?

A. This is where the karma theory comes in.

Q. 484. You see, I come from the middle of this, so it hurts me deeply.

A. I know. I know the effect on the human mind.

Q. 485. I was saved maybe by You, by some miracle.

A. It must have been the Lord. This is all due to our individual karmas. What we think as injustice, what we see as injustice, God alone knows whether it

is justice or injustice. Besides, is not that same injustice being done every day to millions and millions of cows and other animals that are being killed for the food of human beings?

Q. 486. Yes, in our small way, we are beginning to stop that.

A. In this world, there is nothing but misery. As long as the creation exists, these things are bound to remain. That is why the Saints say, "We come to take you away from this world."

14 (i). PRAYER

Q. 487. I wanted to ask you what is the place of prayer in Sant Mat?

A. The real prayer to the Lord is, submitting ourselves to the Lord. What is prayer, as it is ordinarily understood? Our mind creates desires, and we are praying to the Lord to fulfill those desires. We are not explaining to our mind to adjust to the Will of the Lord, but we are trying to explain to the Lord to adjust to the wishes of our mind. Actually, we are the slave of the mind and not of the Lord. We have to become a slave of the Lord, and then there is really nothing to pray for. We are just to submit to what He wants us to do. We should pray to Him to give us strength to face gracefully and boldly whatever He wants us to go through.

When we are devoted to the Lord, naturally He is not unmindful of what we need. For example, if a maid works in your house, she does beautiful work, is always willing and pleasant about it and never asks you for anything, you always feel like giving her something, without her asking. You are so appreciative of what she does and her attitude that you want to give her something, and more than if she had asked for it. If another maid does not work well or even if she works well but is always grumbling and asking for something, you do not feel like giving her anything, and you would even like to dismiss her.

Generally, we pray to the Lord for worldly possessions—health, wealth and prosperity for ourselves and our loved ones. In the first place, we do not know what is best for us, and much less, for anyone else. Many things are received from the

Lord after praying for four or five years, and perhaps we have to kneel in prayer for another ten years to petition Him to relieve us of the very things that we had been praying for. When we ask, we do not know what is good for us. When we do not know what is good for us, why not submit to Him? He will give us what is best for us.

Q. 488. Yes, I know that the lowest type of prayer is a prayer of petition; but when one says, "God, Thy Will be done" or, "God give me guidance, I have a difficult decision to make", to help in making that decision?

A. We should always pray to Him for His mercy and guidance. And for that, whether or not you say the spoken word, it is immaterial. Real prayer comes from the heart. Generally, we have set prayers. We remember them and repeat them every day, several times a day. That is a mechanical prayer, whereas it is the heart that should speak. No words are required, and no particular time is required for that; in fact, a true lover is in constant communion with the Lord. When the heart speaks, He hears, He gives. So we should pray to Him to guide us, to be merciful to us, to redeem us from birth and death, to take us into His own lap; in fact, to merge us into Himself. That is real prayer.

However, any other prayer is not bad. It makes your will power strong. Whether He gives you or not, when you pray to Him, even your mechanical prayer makes your will power strong, and you can face life a little more boldly. You can adjust yourself to situations and circumstances even by means of these mechanical prayers or prayers of petition. But actually, you are not praying to the Lord, you are

explaining to yourself what you want. You are developing your mind, and that helps you to adjust to these circumstances and to face them boldly. Any type of prayer helps, provided it is sincere. But the best prayer is just to submit to Him, and ask only for His guidance and grace.

Q. 489. When a person prays for something and the prayer is answered, is it God that necessarily answers it? It happens quite frequently that a person will pray for something material; for example, a person prays for a new car, and he gets it, or a million dollars, and he gets it. Now, who gives it to him? (Laughter)?

A. What you mean to say is that when we pray, whether it is due to our prayers that we get those things, or even otherwise we would have got them. I think that even otherwise you would have received them. (the audience laughs) The Lord does not want us to be asking and begging Him to fulfill our wishes, nor does He want us to think that our wishes have been fulfilled because we have asked Him. He is so merciful, He gives us even without our asking.

Our karmas bring us all these things that we are wanting. But by prayer we develop ourselves to that extent that we make our will power strong. That is all. We have never prayed to the Lord, "Oh Lord! Whatever we have, take it from us and give it to other people". We have never prayed to Him like that. We are always asking and asking. Well, it is good to pray. Prayer is not bad.

Q. 490. Will you tell us the correct way to pray? What do you mean by praying?

A. As I have said, the general conception of prayer is to ask the Lord to fulfill our desires, instead of

making the mind conform to the Will of the Lord. Anyway, you are strengthening your will power even by that type of prayer. The real prayer is to train our mind to remain in the Will of the Lord, and whatever He gives us, to accept it, and to pray to Him for His mercy and guidance, to take us back to Him, to merge us back into that Divine Ocean of Love. That is real prayer. We should always pray for His grace, for His blessings, to give us His devotion, to give us His Love, to make us worthy of Him.

Q. 491. Do you just ask, or just talk to Him?

A. Mechanical words are not necessary. Prayer should come from the heart, and the heart speaks without language, without words. No set prayers move Him, but the prayer from the heart moves Him. We should be in tune with the Lord, with our heart; that is the right prayer—to be always in constant communion with Him. So real prayer is always from the heart, from within. Set prayers are all right. I am not against them. They also give us certain strength. Our will power becomes so strong that we face our karmas quite boldly and gracefully. But that type of prayer does not take us back to Him. The real prayer is meditation, the spiritual practice, which alone enables us to contact the Shabd, the Sound Current, and that will take us back to Him.

Meditation is nothing but prayer for His guidance, for His grace. That is the only purpose of meditation. We hardly devote any of our time in meditation, but devote all our time in asking for fulfillment of our desires. If we are dutifully loyal in our meditation, we are actually praying to Him. He is not unmindful of what we need, but He will not give us anything

that is not good for us. Perhaps when we are not getting what we want, He has some greater blessing for us in that He may want us to detach ourselves from the world. He wants to take us back to Him. We think that He is not hearing our prayers when actually He *is hearing* our prayers. But He will not give us a hot burning coal to burn our hands, just because we ask for it. He is hearing our prayer, but we do not know whether what we are asking for is right or wrong. He alone knows it. Sometimes we think we are not being heard and that the Lord does not help us. That is a wrong notion. We do not know what is best for us. Just leave it to Him. That is the right prayer.

Q. 492. We should not place our desires or our wishes before God, but should cheerfully accept whatever comes, with confidence that whatever He does, He is doing for our own good. Is that correct? Will you please elaborate?

A. Yes, that is right. We have to adjust ourselves. We should not try to adjust the Lord to our wishes. Mind creates the desires and we are knocking at the Lord's door, asking Him to fulfill them. We are actually slaves of the mind, not slaves of the Lord. We have to become the devotees of the Lord and not of the mind. We have to tell our mind to remain in the Will of the Lord, and not ask the Lord to remain in the will of the mind. So our real prayer is the longing and desire to merge back into Him; and to accomplish that we ask for His grace, His love and devotion; and when we get that, nothing else is left to be desired.

If you bring a millionaire to your house, the money automatically comes with him. But we are only desiring the possessions of the Lord and not the

Lord at all. We generally attach ourselves to what He gives and not to the Giver at all. We forget the Giver and enjoy only His gifts; but if we realize the Giver within us, we automatically get everything. He is the owner of everything, He knows what we need, and He will definitely give us what we need. But we are only to ask for Him. That is the real prayer.

Q. 493. What about praying for other people?

A. If we do not know what is good for us, how can we know what is good for others? Whether you alter anything or not by praying, it is difficult to say; but you do get inner strength by praying to the Lord. We pray for others when we are concerned about them because they are ill or poor, or want their wishes fulfilled. This is due to our attachment with those people, and it is the mind which creates all these desires to be fulfilled, and when we pray for others, we may even be asking for something which is not good for them. For example, if a child is ill and wants some sweets, though he weeps and begs, his mother will not give them to him. She loves the child and knows that sweets are not good for him when he has a fever, and she may have to give him a bitter pill instead. But the child cries for the sweets because he does not know what is good for him. He wants sweets, but the mother does not give them to him, because she loves him and knows that they are not good for him. On the other hand, if she concedes to his request and gives him sweets, I think she really does not love him at all. His fever may go higher and his illness may even become worse because of the sweets which he begged for and received.

Similarly, the Lord or the Master will give us

only what is best for us and for those for whom we are praying. He does not want us to be attached to the world. He wants to detach us from the world. He will not give us those things which will make us forget the Lord and take us back to the senses, and again make us slaves of karmas. He will give us only those things which detach us from the world and take us nearer to the Lord. We do not know what is good for us or for others; but He knows what is good for everyone. So why not leave everything to Him, and just do our duty? Real prayer is not by the lips, not by set words. It comes from the heart, and the heart does not need any language, any words, in order to pray. The real prayer is just submission, surrender to Him.

Q. 494. I know for myself, but I mean for others. I take care of a a lot of people who are sick, old people, and it is for them?

A. There is no harm in praying. Whether you will be able to help them practically or not by doing so, you are at least helping yourself by praying. It will strengthen your will power to face all that.

Q. 495. When a body is dead, if we say some prayers so that the soul may hear it, and to help the soul. Does it?

A. No, the soul does not hear our prayer. These prayers are said for the benefit of the bereaved ones. All that we do is to console those people whose relatives or friends have left them. We can do practically nothing for the departed soul. It has to answer for its own karma. All the ceremonies, prayers and things that we do after anybody dies is, in fact, to console the survivors and ourselves, and not that departed soul. We do not help the dead at all.

His or her karma will take care of that. Generally, when we pray for the dead, I think we are really praying for ourselves to be able to bear our loss and separation. We do not help the departed at all.

Q. 496. Your Holiness, would the suitable devotional approach that we have in the West, a simple prayer, be sufficient for us to attain the goal, rather than the more complicated Sahaj Yoga rules, which I personally find rather difficult?

A. No doubt this is a very difficult subject to understand. The main thing is, what is prayer? Actually, our whole meditation is nothing but a prayer before the Lord; nothing but a prayer from the heart, the soul, to merge back into the Lord. Real prayer is only to pray to the Lord to have mercy on us, to give us His grace and guidance to live in His Will, to give us such circumstances that we can meditate on His Name. That is real prayer. Prayer does not mean that we should pray for worldly things, or that we should pray for the fulfillment of a desire. That is not the process for getting back to the Lord at all; but is, in fact, just sowing seeds which make us come back into the world again to reap the results of those prayers. The real prayer is from the heart; its submission to the Lord. He is not unmindful of what we need. If we are dutiful in our meditation, He who knows what is best for us will definitely give us what we need, whether we ask Him or not.

14 (ii) LIVING IN GOD'S WILL

Q. 497. Can you talk to us about the unconditional surrender to the Master?

A. First, what is surrender? Surrender is when we take our ego and 'I'-ness out of us. As long as the mind dominates the soul, there can be no surrender. When the soul dominates the mind, then you can say that we are in a position to surrender to anybody. We feel that we have surrendered, even in physical love, when we submerge our will into the will of the other person. We try to merge our happiness into the happiness of the other person. We always try to do what pleases the other person, and never try to assert ourself or to adjust the other person to us. We always adjust ourself to the other person's will. That is what we always like to do in love even in this world. We always try to cooperate and to submit ourself to the other person. Spiritual love is the same. We have to surrender ourself to the Master. It means that we have to take our ego out of us and blend our whole heart with his heart. He is already merged into the Lord and by merging ourself into him, we are automatically merged into the Lord. That can be done only by meditation. The more we meditate, the more we are driving out ego. By doing so, we will be drawn towards the Master, and we are automatically surrendering to him, and through him, we are surrendering to the Lord himself.

So we can surrender unconditionally only when we go inside, see the radiant form of the Master, merge ourself in him and then go ahead. That is the real unconditional surrender. But we have to work for that while living in this world. To attain that real

surrender, which we call *Sharan*, we have to remain within the dictates and principles that were told to us at the time of Initiation. We have to put forth our honest efforts to remain on the Path, to give time to meditation. That, in a way, is surrender to the Master, and this surrender will lead to the internal surrender, the real or unconditional surrender. That will be when we see the Master inside, forget our self and merge in His Will, in His love. We will feel that we are the Master there—"we" do not exist.

Q. 498. In *Spiritual Gems*, in the letters, one Master tells his disciple to say, "I am nothing". How can this be interjected into meditation? Is it a process of thinking? Is it to be used consciously? What is the idea behind that?

A. You will get the feeling that you are nothing, when you merge in the love of the Master. You are not mentally nor symbolically to feel that you are nothing, or, "I am nothing", nor to feel that you are everything. You will just forget what you are. When you absolutely blend yourself into the love of another person, then you forget what you are. Then you know that you are nothing. Everything is 'he' or 'she'. Similarly, we have to forget by meditation that we are anything and know that everything is the Master. That will only be, as I have just explained, when we drive our ego out of us by meditation.

Q. 499. May the Master serve as the medium? For instance, I would like to dedicate all my actions to the Lord but that is nebulous. I cannot speak to the Lord. May one take it through the Master?

A. That is the whole essence of the teachings. The fact is that we do not know the Lord and we have not seen the Lord, and so far as we are concerned, we

work through the Master, towards that end. That is the gist of the whole discourse you have just heard.

Q. 500. How does one act always as the Master's agent in order to avoid current karma? How can he force his mind to stop and think in this manner before acting?

A. We have to submit to 'Thy Will', His will. And that we can do only if we meditate. The Master's wish is that we should be firm on the four principles, which are pre-requisites before we can travel on that Path. So long as we are firm on that, we have submitted ourselves to the Master. Then, automatically, our mind develops to that extent that it starts submitting rather than expecting, or not adjusting to a situation.

We will submit only if we have love. Without love, we cannot submit to anybody. Love is such a thing which makes one submit. Love drives out ego from us. That love we have within ourself; it does not come from outside; it does not come from anybody; it comes from within. And, when Love comes in us, all the good qualities of a human being come up, like cream in milk. All that we have to fight for with ourself now in order to be good, to be honest, to behave rightly, to do this or that, will automatically come in us when we feel that devotion within us for the Lord. Instead of trying to train our mind to pick up good qualities, one by one, the cream of all those qualities automatically will come in us. When we are devoted to Him, we are devoted to everybody. We have no ego. Then we do not want to assert; then we do not want to offend. Automatically all those good qualities are manifested in us.

Q. 501. During the course of the day we probably spend thousands

and thousands of seconds and have thousands of actions that we do. Some of them are reactions. These actions are seemingly very quick. How can we do them in the name of the Master? Is this automatic to a satsangi, or does it have to be an automatic projection of some kind to perform everything in the name of the Master?

A. To do everything in the name of the Master is to remain within the principles which he has laid down for us; to live our lives according to the principles of Sant Mat and devote our time every day, regularly and punctually, to meditation. If we do everything with that Sant Mat atmosphere around us, then we are doing it in the name of the Master. We do it in the name of the Master when we take ourself out of ourself. As long as the self is in us, we try to justify our actions in the name of the Master. Actually, what we are doing is following the instinct of the mind. When you will withdraw yourself from the mind, then you will subdue your mind with the help of meditation and submit yourself unconditionally to the Master inside, and whatever you will do will be in the name of the Master. As long as we are slaves of the mind, and the mind is a slave of the senses, and we are running about outside, how can we say we are doing it in the name of the Master?

Q. It is automatic then, after one has accomplished?

A. Yes.

Q. 502. Maharaj Ji, Guru Nanak enunciated an aphorism that we have used frequently, and if it is your pleasure I should like your comment. He said to the Supreme Father: "If you send me hunger, I shall be filled with Thy Name (Nam); if You send me miseries. I shall accept them as pleasures; if You send me happiness, I shall try to propitiate Thee."

A. The idea behind this is that in whatever condition

or state the Lord keeps us, we should always remain in His Devotion. If we are rich, we should not forget Him, we should give our time to meditation. That is a part of karma that has been given us to pay for. If we happen to be poor, we should not be frustrated; we should not be unhappy; still we should strive to devote our time in meditation, in His memory. The idea is, in whatever position He places us, we should make the best use of this opportunity of being in a human body, to reach our Destination, to follow that Way, to follow that Path and merge back into the Lord.

As I explained yesterday, this whole world is filled with rich and poor, happy and unhappy people, according to each individual's karma. We get this human body due to both, good and bad karmas. We have sown good seeds and bad seeds. While being in this body, we have to reap the fruit of those good seeds and also of the bad seeds. So, naturally we will have happy moments in life and we will have sad moments in life. If we have more good karmas and less bad karmas, we will be more happy and less unhappy in this world. If we have more bad karmas and less good karmas, we will be more miserable and have fewer happy moments in life. But, good and bad, this combination gives us the human form. If we had only good karmas we would have been in heaven. If we had only bad karmas we would have been in hell.

If, while reaping the fruit of good karmas we are given to enjoyment and luxuries and sensual pleasures, and forget the Lord; and if when reaping the fruit of bad karmas we are so frustrated, so unhappy that we cannot even think of the Lord, we are always

miserable, even then we do not remember the Lord, when are we going to remember Him? We have to experience both, happiness and unhappiness, and remember the Lord under all circumstances. Being in this world, we have to reap the fruit of good and bad karmas.

Guru Nanak meant that we should remain in His Will. In whatever position He places us, whatever we have to account for, our good or bad karmas, under every circumstance, in every condition, we should not forget the Lord. We should always keep Him in view, keep our Destination in view; try to give the account of good and bad karmas, being in this body but not forgetting the Destination that we have got to achieve. That Path we should never forget. That is why he said, in effect, "Oh Lord! In whatever position you will place me, I will never forget you, because this human birth I have got just to remember you, and I can achieve the purpose of this human birth only if I give my devotion to you. If I do not do that, I am not making proper use of the human form."

Q. 503. Would you discuss obedience and the part it plays in our spiritual teaching? Many people have job conditions that require obedience of many types in their varied duties at work.

A. Obedience is another word for submission. And submission is another word for driving out the ego. When we are proud or full of ego, we do not like to submit to anybody, we do not like to be obedient to anybody. In other words, obedience means merging your will in the will of the other person. Driving your 'self' out of yourself and merging your will with the will of another, that is obedience.

This is the first lesson which is given to our children in our Indian homes. They must be obedient to their parents and do what the parents tell them. There is no question or reason 'why'. They must learn to understand in life, how to drive out their ego, how to respect the elders and be obedient to their wishes. Then it is for the parents to come up to that standard to demand obedience. But children are always taught to be respectful and obedient to their elders. When we go to school, we must be obedient to our teacher. We must submit our will to the teacher's will. And we have to practise the same thing when we come on the Path, which is obedience to the Master. But obedience will come only when there is love within us, for without love obedience can never come.

Love always helps us in merging our will with the other person's will. We take our 'self' out of ourself and become the other person. Love helps in that. Without love there can be absolutely no obedience. So when love comes, all these qualities rise in us, like cream on the milk. We do not have to fight for these qualities in ourselves. When that love for the Master, for the Lord, comes within us, all other qualities just come automatically within us. If these qualities have not come within us, we can presume that we have absolutely no love for the Master and the Lord. When that Love takes its place within us, all other things are driven out. Then there is obedience; there is submission; there is understanding. All good qualities automatically take shape.

Q. 504. Obedience very frequently takes the form of blind submission, so that there is no awareness there. It is just a blind submission. How do you relate that?

A. I do not think there is any blind submission. Love does not create blind submission.

Q. 505. But there are many job conditions where the employee is just required to give blind submission.

A. That is something different from what I am talking about. That is from the worldly point of view. That is our duty. We are being paid for it and we have to be obedient. But in this Path we are not paid at all for obedience. Love is the only payment; the devotion, the understanding; that is the reward. There people buy our loyalty, our sincerity and our obedience with money. And here, we buy it with Love.

Q. 506. The real nub of my question was, what does one do to his own spiritual advancement if he is obedient to orders, that have in them some characteristic below his standards of morality of ethics?

A. He can escape from the situation. He should try to escape from the situation if he is not able to live with his job, if he is not happy there.

Q. 507. In following the material life in whatever our ambitions or worldly job is, in differentiating between how much we should pursue our career or profession or whatever, and our spiritual attempts, should we not try hard to see that it does not bother our spiritual attempts?

A. We shall have to try our best for our living in this world, and then if we do not achieve it , we should leave it to the Will of the Lord. The results should be left to Him. That does not mean that we should not try to do our best for our promotion, and work hard to earn all that. We have certain responsibilities and duties which we must do in this world. At the same time we should not get so much involved in

these things that we forget the real purpose for which we want these things. These are just a means to a certain end. We should not be so mcuh involved in the means that we forget the end. The end should always be kept in view, and what we should do is to try to achieve that end.

Q. 508. There are so many hours and so much time. A karmic time of working, of graduating?

A. We are to consider so many factors in our life. You cannot draw a line for this work, how many hours we should work for our living, for it depends on so many factors.

Q. 509. Well, in order to go the other way, supposing I work only six hours a day and spend all the other time in meditation or trying to?

A. I personally feel, if we are regular and punctual in our meditation and we are living in Sant Mat and for Sant Mat, that two hours and thirty minutes or three hours daily are sufficient for meditation.

Q. 510. I have worked eighteen hours a day for two years straight without any time off. I try——?

A. I am just telling you, since you have asked me the question. It is not the mechanical meditation which brings about better results. It is the *living* of Sant Mat. By meditation we have to build that atmosphere around us in which we have to live, in which we have to imbibe Sant Mat. It is not the time that matters. It is living the life of Sant Mat, that life of devotion, that life of meditation that matters. We do not live in it only for that two or three-hour period. We live in it the whole day. That does not mean we give three hours to meditation

and the rest of the day we forget what Sant Mat is. We have to live in Sant Mat daily, for twenty-four hours. Out of that, two or three hours meditation is sufficient, if thereby we can build that atmosphere in which we have to live the whole day.

14 (iii) LOVE ONE ANOTHER, HELP YOURSELF/OTHERS, TRUE PEACE

Q. 511. As Jesus said, "By their fruit ye shall know them", does that mean how we act regardless of our intellectual ability, or that whatever man is we should love one another?

A. Brother, when do we love each other? When we have a pure heart, when we have devotion in our heart, then only we will love each other. The nearer we are to the Lord, the nearer we are to each other. The more devotion and love of the Lord is within us, the more we find we are closer and nearer to each other. The more we are away from Him, the more we drift away from each other. When Christ said, "Love one another", we forget the real essence behind that. We can love one another only when we see the Lord in one another. When we have love of the Lord within us, we will love one another. Then we do not love persons, but love the Lord within each one of us. We are not lost in individualities and personalities then. We are lost in our love for the Lord. When we are in tune with Him, we find Him within every one. When we find Him within every one, the question of superiority and inferiority does not arise; the question of ego does not arise; the question of hatred does not arise. So in order to love one another we must have that love, His love, within us. Then we will find we are also close to each other.

I mentioned somewhere, perhaps in Chicago, that everybody tries to find peace in this world. At least according to what I read in the newspapers, every nation, every country is anxious to create peace in the world. The approach, however, is either

political, economic or social, and we can never achieve peace in the world as long as we are trying on those levels. We can never convert all countries and nations to one ideology along those lines. If, on the other hand, our approach becomes spiritual, we can come much closer to each other. But the difficulty is that we do not try to approach each other from the spiritual angle. If everyone realizes that he is to love the same Lord, and we know the same Lord is within everyone of us, and if everybody would make an effort to seek Him within, then as we are nearer to the Lord, we will be nearer to each other; and nations and countries will automatically come closer to each other. If our object is one, if our love is one, then we will love one another. If we forget Him, we ignore Him, we do not try to know who He is, and yet we want to create peace in the world, we can never succeed on that basis, no matter how hard we may try. History at least does not encourage us from this standpoint.

In order to have this outside peace we must have peace within ourselves. And we can have peace within ourselves only when we are in tune with the Lord, when we are nearer to our destination, when we are nearer to Him. Then there will be no ego or hatred nor malice against each other. Rather, we will find love in everyone of us and we will be much closer to each other, as we will be on the same spiritual platform.

Now we want to create peace with the help of arms, with the help of superiority, with the help of social reform, by changing the political structure of the world, converting people to the political ideology of our own way of thinking. We can never achieve

it that way. Politicians may try their way during their whole life, but they will never achieve it. To even think so is just a self-deception. We are talking of peace and preparing for war. We are not living at peace in the world nor with ourselves.

If we want real peace we must search for it within ourself. The nearer we are to our destination and Home, the more we will find that peace within our own-self, the more we will find peace in the whole world, and the more we will be closer and nearer to each other. Generally, when you meet satsangis, those who are traveling on the same Path, you do not need an introduction; you feel so close to each other. You just meet and you feel that you have known each other for ages. Why? The objective is the same. Love is the same. The destination is the same. You are all nearer to the Lord, so you are all nearer to each other.

In order to find peace we must look for it in the right direction. Unless we merge in that Light, unless we become a part of that Light about which Christ said, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Unless we see that Light within us, unless we merge into that Light, we can never get peace. But nobody tries to open that eye, nobody tries to see that Light. We are ignoring, rather we ridicule and mock anybody who talks about that Light, or about that single eye or third eye. So, how can we get peace in this world?

Q. 512. We have been thinking about what you said about giving love to other people. It is possible in this situation where one has to work very closely with people who are aggressively hostile, and where the more love you give them the more hostile they seem to be; and if you try to ignore them as the other way out, they aggress

upon you with even more hostility, and soon it becomes a situation where either you have to leave this job and find something else, or put up with it somehow or another?

A. Well, brother, choose the lesser evil.

Q. 513. What is the lesser evil?

A. You should not torture yourself by hating anybody. You must live within yourself, with yourself. You should just give love, do your duty in the best way possible, and be kind and helpful and good to the other person. It is impossible to reform another person by trying to set him right according to your way of thinking. But you can always adjust to his way of thinking. You can always reform yourself. You can always improve yourself. You cannot improve another, so you will always be happy if you are able to adapt yourself to the situation, and you may not be happy if the other person tries to adapt himself to your situation. It is always better that we adapt ourself.

The world is full of problems, and we cannot solve all of them. But by meditation, by spiritual advancement, we can always rise above these problems. Then they do not affect us at all; whether people think about us in a slanderous way, or they do not like us, or disregard us, or are indifferent to us. These things do not bother us any more, because we have risen above their ways of thinking.

Many times I have explained that we cannot pick up the thorns of the world, but we can always wear strong shoes so that the thorns do not affect us at all. That is the purpose of meditation. That is the purpose of Sant mat. We develop ourselves to that level that these petty things do not bother us. Then these

problems are no longer problems to us. Not that we are able to solve them, but we can always rise above them.

So do the best you can in that situation, in all sincerity, and then leave it to the Lord. Do not torture yourself unnecessarily by letting it bother you. If you are living with your meditation, these small things will not bother you at all.

Q. 514. Does this imply, then, that we should turn our backs?

A. Do whatever you can under the circumstances. You can avoid the situation and you can be indifferent to their attitude. I mean, do whatever is practical. One should always take a practical, objective view of the circumstances.

Q. 515. Well, we have noticed that the people who handled them best are those who have aggressed right back at them. But is that the best way of doing it?

A. That is not the right way. For example, I will tell you about an actual experience of the Great Master: When he started preaching Sant Mat openly, when he started extensive tours in the country, he had a lot of opposition, especially from bigoted religious people. Perhaps they thought that he was misinterpreting that Holy Book, the Granth Sahib, and trying to spoil and corrupt the masses. Of course, his teachings were pure spirituality and devoid of commercialism, they appealed to the seekers of Truth, and he attracted large crowds. Those opposing the Great Master became very nervous, thinking that their membership might dwindle, and perhaps it might affect their income also. In those early days they opposed him in devious ways, even attempting physical violence, as you have read in *With a Great Master in India*,

by Dr. Johnson. In India, we usually hold satsang in the open, because no hall can accommodate us. We have gatherings of ten thousand to twenty thousand; and sometimes over two hundred thousand.

So, wherever the Great Master went to hold satsang, those opposing him set up their own camp next to it, and put up their own loud speakers so that whatever the Great Master said should not be heard by the seekers. When the Great Master had a program to go anywhere, they would be there the day before, parading and announcing with the beat of drums to the whole public that he was coming to currupt the people and they should not attend the satsang. The result was that more and more people came to hear him and more and more began to follow him, so much so that the people who opposed him attended out of curiosity and ended up by becoming his most devoted followers. I know many who are living in the Dera now, who in the beginning opposed him tooth and nail on the religious platform until they realized what he was really teaching. They are very sincere and devoted satsangis and some of them are writing books for us now.

Throughout all that, the Great Master never changed his attitude. He never argued with anybody. He simply said, "I am just doing my duty. If the teachings appeal to you, you are most welcome. If they do not appeal to you, I cannot help it. I have to do my duty". He treated everyone with love and kindness, and now the very people who opposed him take pride in being the followers of such a Great Master. At first they had thought that they would attend his satsangs just to expose the Great Master, as well as out of curiosity. But in the end they were

convinced of the greatness and the Truth of his teachings.

When you are strong in your convictions and you have no malice or hatred against anybody, you do your duty and let other do what they like, they will change and you will remain strong within yourself. At least, you are happy with yourself. You do not make yourself miserable by hating them. So we have to make the best use of a situation, without having any malice against anybody.

Q. 516. I have found a very good remedy in a particular case of aggressiveness. I try to find out the month and day of that person's birth and then see, more or less, what his traits are. Sometimes you will see that they are completely antagonistic to the particular sign that you were born under. And this will help you to understand the person, when you know his traits. And I know it to be almost excellent, because sometimes it is almost a complete impasse and I realize it and bring his horoscope...?

A. But, sister, you will only know by that horoscope the trend of that man towards you, which you already know by physical experience.

Q. Yes, also, but it does help though?

A. The question does not arise to know when we have to improve ourselves. In every situation, whatever the other person's view may be, we must improve ourselves. That is all. It should not affect us even if the other person slanders or otherwise abuses us.

Q. But I think if you know what sign he is under...?

A. I think the other person makes you know him much better than you try to know by these methods. When you meet a person, you know where you stand as far as he is concerned, as far as his likings for you

are concerned. Sometimes these scientific or mathematical calculations may deceive us, or may be wrong, but the human touch does not deceive us at all. We know where we stand.

Q. 517. If we slandered another and the other person does not forgive us, though we ask for forgiveness, what should we do?

A. Sister, the most important thing is that you have to forgive yourself for that behavior. If you have honestly tried to make amends and are truly sorry, then it should not bother you whether the other person has forgiven you or not. And the other person will only be convinced that you are really sorry, by your behavior. The mere word 'sorry' does not solve any problem. He has to know from your behavior that you are really sorry. You can always express, not by mere words, but by deeds, how much repentance you have for that attitude of yours. That is how you forgive yourself, and when you forgive yourself, you become happy.

Q. 518. How can we forgive ourselves when we hurt others? If there is a misunderstanding between two people, should not the guilty person apologize in order not to lay the blame on the other, and perhaps not make him feel badly? These are two questions. The first one is: How can we forgive ourselves when we hurt others?

A. We can forgive ourselves only if we cease hurting others. If we are repeating the same thing, it is self-deception to say that we have forgiven ourselves. In order to forgive ourselves, we must cease repeating that mistake. When we really repent and do not repeat that mistake again, then we can say that we have forgiven ourselves. But forgiving ourselves means not to repeat that mistake again and absolutely forget what we have done to another person. That sense

of guilt should go away from us when we have reformed ourselves.

We should never hesitate or feel ashamed to apologize if we have hurt anybody, if we have injured anybody's feelings; whether the other person forgives us or not, at least that helps us. When we have apologized, we feel light, we feel much better with ourselves. It is for the other person to forgive us or not, but at least we have forgiven ourselves by apologizing and sincerely showing our regret.

Q. 519. The second question: If there is a misunderstanding between two people, should not the guilty person apologize in order not to lay the blame on the other, and perhaps not make him feel badly?

A. When we want to clear a misunderstanding, the question of pinning down the blame on one person or another does not arise. When we want to finish that topic, when we want to forgive, we should never try to decide whether you were wrong or whether I was wrong. We should always try to say that you forgive me and I forgive you, and we had better forget whatever unpleasantness has happened between us. The question of thinking and trying to analyze, whether you were wrong or whether I was wrong, will lead to another type or trouble again. So, if we want to forgive ourselves and forget, it is better to express our regrets sincerely and then forget what has happened between us.

Q. 520. Man has to redeem man, so what part does man play in this evolutionary process?

A. Brother, man is only to help himself. We can help others only when we have helped ourselves. If we are not in a position to help ourselves, we cannot help others at all. If we have nothing, how can we

give anything? Sometimes we try to help others but, instead of helping others, we are making ourselves miserable. We mix with them so much that we share their misery instead of sharing our love with them. We do not have anything within us, so we cannot give what we do not have. By trying to be helpful before we are able to help, we find that we have made ourselves miserable with their plight. We must help ourself before we can help anybody else. We must have something within us to give and to share with others. If we are empty, how can we give? In order to help humanity, in order to help anybody else, we must rise to that stage where we can help and shower our grace right and left. Then only can we help them, Otherwise, it is self-deception and we will only share their agony and misery, without being of any help to them at all.

Q. 521. Just as a baby lioness gets a slap from its mother when it walks into a dangerous pen, is it not right for us as grown up children to sometimes slap our brother with the truth? I think it is not love to accept everything that is given to us. Buddha has said, "I do not accept the gift that evil gives. I will not accept it." Is it love always to accept, or is it good to incur the hatred of someone whom we correct, and to stand away from it and not to hate them?

A. Brother, nobody will mind if it is a slap of love. Nobody will mind to be corrected if there is love behind it, and if you approach him with affection, with love, with devotion, and with understanding. If you try to boss over him and think that you are superior to him and he is inferior to you, that is not the right approach. He will not understand. He will never be on the Path again. But, by your example, by your own love, by your own devotion, you can always set

him right without hurting him or driving him away from the Path. Rather, he needs more love. Everybody needs love, and some people need more love. So we should give him more love, more understanding to put him on the Path, and the question of slapping does not arise at all.

Q. 522. I mean, should they be told the truth?

A. The truth must be explained by love. If the other person knows everything is for his own good, and it is explained with love, he will understand it. But when there is bossing, when there is hatred, or when we try to inflate our own ego, and try to appear superior, then we are not helping him. Instead, we are driving him off the Path. We should be helpful to each other, but always with love and with respect. We should be an example of love and devotion and be generous-hearted, open-hearted. Then even the worst criminal could benefit.

We should have no hatred against anybody. For example, a mother does not hate a child when she spanks him and the child thinks that she is displeased. Actually, she is happy when the child is set right again for there is an inner love in her heart, and she wants to see the child become good and prosperous in the world. Sometimes, though, she has to abuse him and to spank him, but she does not give vent to her anger or ego; that should not be there. It is only with the purpose of correcting the child, and the child knows that his mother loves him very much, and he should do what she wants him to do. When that feeling is there, the child will also receive what she wants to give.

On the other hand, when the child knows that his mother hates him, whatsoever she may do, he

will never accept it. So, if we give anything with love and devotion, it will always be accepted in earnest, straight away. That is why Christ said that we must first forgive others before we ask His forgiveness. It means that our heart must be pure; we must be receptive to His grace. If we have any ill feeling against anybody, it means that our heart is not ready for His grace and His love. We have first to give love to people before we can receive His love.

Q. 523. We have been told that the Lord helps those who help themselves. Suppose a person becomes helpless and cannot help himself?

A. We are helping ourselves, when we are in meditation day and night. His grace will also be there. If we refuse to meditate and are always expecting His grace, we do not deserve it. If a beggar is not going to knock at the door, how is the owner of the house going to give anything to him? If a child does not weep, the mother also does not pay much attention. For example, in our country, generally, we have maid servants, and one takes the child out to play so that the mother can do her work. If the child weeps and cries for the mother, the maid servant tries to humor him. She tells him fairy stories, or she may give him toys to play with, or she may give him some sweets. She tries to engage his attention. But if the child refuses everything and just weeps for the mother, and wants only the mother and nothing else, the mother cannot resist it. She runs from the house and embraces him.

Similarly, we are all children playing in this world with the material or worldly faces and all that. We are so attached to them and absorbed in playing

with them that we do not even think about the Lord. We are away from Him. But when we have real longing and devotion for Him alone and want only Him, we withdraw our attention from everything else. Then He cannot bear it, comes to meet us with open arms and embraces us as He receives us.

Mostly we do not try to meditate for His sake. We meditate for worldly possessions. Even if we meditate, we do not pray to Him for His grace, but we pray for worldly things to satisfy our worldly desires and cravings. We want Him to fulfill our desires and nothing else. We do not want Him for His sake. In Sant Mat we are just to pray to Him for Him, to merge back into Him. When we do our duty with love and devotion, He will also help us. When we are helping ourself, we will get His help too.

Q. 524. If we are all a part of all that lives and moves and has its being in this world, then should we not feel so close to all other things that we should help wherever we can, or even go out of our way to try to help, and not consider that it is karma and if we help it will bring us back again into another life in this world?

A. We should definitely help others and we are meant to help others, but not at our own cost. First we must help ourselves in order to be able to help others. If we are not living with ourselves, actually we are not in a position to help others. But we must come to that level to be able to help others, to feel affinity with them, oneness with them. There is no harm in helping anybody; in fact, we should help others—not only human beings, but even the lower creation. We should help them and will help them by not killing them and by being merciful to them; by not eating them, and in so many ways we can help.

When the devotion of the Lord comes in us, we find that same devotion of the Lord in everyone. Then we actually want to help everybody. We feel like helping because we find the Lord within everyone. The Lord is our object of love, He is our Beloved. So we like to do everything for them, just for the love of the Lord, and not the personality. But that is possible only if we develop that devotion and love of the Lord within us. As long as we do not succeed in doing that, I do not see how we can help others. If there is kindness in my heart, naturally I will feel a little tender about things and want to help others. If my own heart is rough and hard, and not at all mild, I am not in a position to help others. I must therefore first improve myself, help myself, so that I am in a position to help others.

Q. 525. When you know this and know you must develop love, you really do, but there are times of distress when things get away from you, how can you develop this love?

A. Brother, practically, it comes when it comes. You do not have the power to develop it. When His grace is there, it just comes; but the practical step that we can take to develop our devotion to the Lord is to meditate, is to build that atmosphere around us of devotion for the Lord by reading books, by satsang, by discussion, and by having harmonious meetings. By helping each other, we build that atmosphere around us in which, then, we start giving, and we find that the more we give our devotion to the Lord, the more it grows every day. The more love we have, the more it grows. But the only practical step that we can take is to be honest in our meditation, for then devotion and love automatically come.

Q. 526. Maharaj Ji, I practise as a doctor and I am sure there are others here who are lawyers. How far are we to go in our efforts in our work? In many cases you can extend yourself beyond treatment. How far should we go?

A. You should treat the patient according to the best of your ability, with the knowledge and skill that you have acquired. Still, with your best efforts, you can never get all the results that you want. If people could be saved by doctors and by medicines, nobody would have died. We have no cures for certain diseases, though we do our best. We find that some medicine has cured some people, but others are not affected at all by the same medicine. We know all this, so we should try to use our knowledge to the best of our ability and then leave the rest to the Lord.

Q. 527. I, as an individual have always been interested in helping handicapped children from a teaching point of view. Not as a teacher, but a helper.....?

A. Sister, we should try our best to help them. We must help people in the world. We are born for that purpose. Only humans can be helpful to humans. But we should not be involved so much that we do not have time for our own selves. Keeping our other duties in view, we should try to be helpful to others, according to our means. When, sometimes, even with our best intentions, we are not able to help them, that is their karma. It will automatically take care of them. But we must help them as much as we can, according to our means and time at our disposal, so as not to interfere with our other duties. We should always be kind and helpful to each other. Yet, when we are not able to help them as much as we want to, then we can say that it is their karma that we cannot help them to a greater extent.

14 (iv) DUTIES TOWARDS RELATIONS

Q. 528. Master, how much is a satsangi's family or relations affected by his being a satsangi?

A. What brings us back into this life is our attachments. If we are attached to anything or anybody in this world, that attaches us to this world. In that way we are leaving our roots in this world, and these roots bring us back into this world. If a satsangi is attached to Shabd, to the Master, naturally that course is pulling him much more than worldly attachments. He has detached himself from the world, from his relations, and has attached himself to the Master or the Audible Life Stream, or the Supreme Father, and he is being pulled to the Lord by his attachment.

A satsangi's relations and people around him are attached to him. Their attachment to the satsangi will bring them to him, and the satsangi's attachment to the Lord will bring him to the Lord. So, those who are attached to you are being helped in that way, for eventually they will have to come to the Path to reach the same place where you have gone. If, on the other hand, you are attached to them and not attached to the Master or Shabd or the Lord, you will be pulled back by your attachment to them. When we are attached to a bulldozer, and a dog is attached to us, he cannot pull us back. He will be drawn along with us, and thus gets the advantage of our being attached to the bulldozer. Actually it is the degree of attachment that matters. Their attachment to you will help them because you are attached to something more powerful with an upward tendency; but your attachment to them would help neither them nor you.

Q. 529. Who decides which is the bulldozer?

A. The Master, Shabd, Word or Nam is the bulldozer.

Q. 530. How can we help those in our own home who refuse to listen?

A. I think you can help them best by not forcing them to listen. Be an example to them, according to what you have gained out of the teachings. By our living example we automatically influence them. If it is in their karma, they will run after you to understand what they want to know. When you try to force people, I think you are driving them away instead of attracting them. There is nothing to be forced on anyone. It must come from within. And that will come only when you are a living example for them. So you really help them by not trying to force them to understand.

Q. 531. My family are all so much against my talking about Sant Mat or even bringing up the subject, and I just do not dare to talk to anyone about it.

A. There is really no need to talk to anyone.

Q. 532. Yet I wonder what to do about it. I have an adopted son almost thirty years now, and I know so many things are all wrong. What can one do about it? Can I tell him? I do not dare to talk to him much because it disturbs him, and the answers that I get leave me disturbed. What can I do about a case like that? I cannot ignore it entirely?

A. You can just try to help and explain with love, and do not feel much concerned or worried about it. There is no other alternative. You cannot ignore it entirely, but with affection and love you can try to help him understand. Then, if he does not want it, you should not worry about it. You have done your

duty. We should not unnecessarily saise unpleasant issues. In a family we, have to overlook many things in order to live together harmoniously.

Q. 533. I have got to know whether one should meet a problem head-on, or whether one knows inside what is right or not?

A. We should not feel disturbed inside. We should not lose our balance. We know these things do happen, and everybody has to pay for his own karma. People are just dancing to the tune of their mind, so we have to adjust. If we try to solve the problems of the world we can never succeed. We can only rise above these problems. If we start picking up the thorns of the world, we can never succeed, but if we have strong shoes on our feet, these pricks do not bother us. We should rise above these things by means of our spiritual practice, and not feel much disturbed about them.

Q. 534. For the past year and a half I have attended satsang almost regularly, and my wife has offered very little resistance. She is coming here this afternoon for the first time, and the lack of resistance from her, is that an indication that deep down there is an acceptance that has not come out yet?

A. I do not know about that, but it is very clear that this is an indication of her affection and love for you. I do not know whether this is an indication that she is being prepared to understand or to see, but it definitely indicates that she has affection and respect for your principles. She wants to please you. You should take it only in that light, and then leave the rest of it to her own fate, her own karma.

We should never try to force the teachings on anybody else. We can help anybody who is interested. But if a person is not interested, we can help him

much more by trying to live the life ourselves and not force our views on him. At least in this country there is so much independence of viewpoints, so much individuality. Everybody has his own background and he has to stand on his own convictions, on his own principles. And everyone has his own time, so we should never feel frustrated if our partner is not interested in Sant Mat, as long as the partner is not an obstacle in our way.

If we are really fond of each other, we will also respect each other's individual convictions, each other's individual views on life, and especially regarding spirituality. So we should be happy and grateful if the other partner in any way is not an obstacle in our Path. Of course, we are always happy if both, husband and wife, can come on the Path. They can be of great help and strength to each other. But the alternative is, if one does not become a block in your way, you should appreciate that too.

Q. 535. Master, are we to help our relatives if they need help? For instance, a mother who has young babies, would that be considered as an attachment when we render service to them?

A. No, sister. Non-attachment does not mean that we are not to render service to our relations at all. We have certain responsibilities towards our parents, our other relations and friends. We must carry out these responsibilities, otherwise we are not the right type ourselves. I must say, we should always do our best to help especially older people who need our help, who need our respect, who need our strength to pull through that age and that time. To help them is something quite different from merely feeling perturbed the whole day and worrying about them

and yet not doing anything for them. That is no use. We should help them practically and yet not be worried about them. We must do our duty by giving them respect and help. We owe them certain obligations that we must pay, otherwise we would not be able to live with ourselves. Our conscience would bother us if we did not do our duty, and we could have no peace of mind.

A mother and a father do so much for their children, to help them, to give them a good start in life, to guide them. They sacrifice so many things for their children, and children also have responsibilities to their parents and benefactors in their old age. We must do our duty. They did theirs, and when we become parents and do so much for our own children, then we realize how much our parents did for us. We are greatly indebted to them. We feel frustrated when our children are not attentive to us and we say that we have done so much for them, but they do not care for us. At the same time we forget what we are doing to our own parents. They may happen to be frustrated and have the same feelings towards us that we are having now that we are parents. So, if we are dutiful and devoted to our parents, we can expect the same from our own children.

Q. 536. I have niece with babies. As an aunt, should I help if she needs help?

A. These are just individual things and you can make up your mind about what she needs and what you can do; but I am discussing these things in general. We should be helpful to each other. Only a human can be helpful to a human. Animals cannot come to our

help, so we must give a helping hand to each other wherever we can.

Q. 537. If one were put in a position where one had to choose between duty to one's father and duty and help to one's daughter, which has precedence?

A. You want to know whether you have more allegiance to your father or to your daughter. Well, you have to help both. You have a certain responsibility towards your father, and a certain responsibility towards your daughter. You have to deal with both of them, and only you can decide how far you can ignore your daughter and how far you cannot ignore your father, and how far you cannot ignore yourself in dealing with the situation. I think the answer must come from you.

Q. 538. And one's personal problems, like family and people that leave one disturbed, should one try to go and leave them as they are, or stay and meet the situation and overcome the problems?

A. We have to live in this world, realizing and taking care of our responsibilities and duties towards other people, but not feel much concerned about them. We should attend to all these things just as a matter of duty. We should be a better citizen, a better husband or wife, a better son or daughter, by doing our duties, but should not worry about public opinion, but just do our duty.

Q. 539. Maharaj Ji, would it be possible for disembodied spirits to affect embodied spirits?

A. You mean those people who left us, could they affect us? Well, we are affected because we are attached to them. That is why the Great Master

always used to advise people that if we are attached to those who have departed and we do not overcome our attachment to them, sometimes we even hinder their progress, by trying to pull them back. And if they are also attached to us and they have not found their way up, they sometimes also haunt us and pull us. I remember an incident in the time of the Great Master when a very good satsangi had died and his daughter was very much attached to him. Naturally, when he died, she was weeping and wailing, and the Great Master was trying to console her, saying that her father was to go, that he had lived his full life-span and had well povided for her and the other children in this life; so she must face reality and forget him, when He was no more. But the attachments are very strong with certain people. She could not overcome all that despite the advice. One day when she sat for Bhajan, as she explained later to the Great Master, her father appeared to her. He told her, "Look now, my darling, what you have done to me. For three days you have been weeping and slapping your own face, and by doing so you have been slapping my face. How sore it is! Look what harm you are doing to me. You are pulling me and are not letting me go up. Why can you not forget all this?" She then wrote a letter to the Great Master, and the Great Master came and consoled her also inside, and took her father up.

Sometimes we have to experience these things to know reality. We must face reality, but we try to escape it. We know a person is dead, he cannot come back, he is no more, but we feel that he is living. We refuse to understand that he is gone. So unless we live with reality, we can never be happy.

Q. 540. May I ask whether this factor of attachments tends to favor cremation rather than burial? Going back to the grave as people do, a great deal of attachment is avoided by cremation with no definite place to go to mourn over the remains?

A. I think, brother, we generally do not try to face reality. We must face reality. The one who has gone, has gone forever. He will not come back to us, and when we visit the grave and all that, we do not go for the sake of the dead. We go for our own weaknesses. We go for our attachments to those people. We do not go for their sake.

Q. 541. I do not think you have the Christian point of view. They are sleeping in the grave until Resurrection Day!

A. Well, let them. It will be quite a mess when all of them get up. (There was much laughter here) I think that is wrong. What we mean by "sleeping" is we are asleep as far as the Lord is concerned, because we have forgotten the Lord. We are sleeping under the spell of this maya or illusion, these attachments. We have forgotten our Real Home, the Lord, the Destination. And when we come to the Master, we sleep as far as the world is concerned and are awake as far as the Lord is concerned. When Christ said that the dead will rise, he meant that we are all dead as far as the Lord is concerned. We have forgotten Him. We have forgotten our Real Home, and we will be "resurrected from the dead", get that everlasting life, when we get in touch with Him. Then we will he dead as far as the world is concerned. Now we are dead as far as the Lord is concerned. Saints come to put life into the dead, and that does not mean the decaying dead bodies, but the living dead. We, who have forgotten Him, are all dead

though living in this world. When we are in touch with the Shabd, we attain eternal life. So the question of these dead bodies in the graves rising again, does not arise at all. Those bodies have decomposed, finished. To think that they will come back to life again is just a self-deception, I would say.

Q. 542. Maharaj Ji, the day of resurrection, which is mentioned in the Bible, is an individual affair and is not universal?

A. That is right. Everybody faces that day of resurrection. So it hardly matters whether you cremate or you bury or you dispose of the body in other ways. There are so many ways of disposing of the body, according to the needs of the country. For example, Arabia is all desert. They have no wood, so they could not cremate. It was much more practical and economical to bury the dead, by putting the body in the sand, and the body would decompose under the sand and there would be no bad smell. That was all right. In countries where they had a lot of wood or jungles, they followed the custom that most Indians do. They cremated the dead bodies. And now that electricity is available, it is also done by electric current.

It hardly makes any difference what you do with the body after death. We are concerned only as long as the soul, the life is in it. Once the soul leaves the body, we are not concerned with that body. At one place people are weeping and mourning, "He has left us", at another place people are blowing trumpets and joyfully proclaiming. "He has come. A child is born". It is the same soul, leaving one family weeping and sorrowful, and creating happiness in the other family. So it really looks like a strange

drama. We weep for our attachments, our affections, our love, our own comfort, our own security, and not for the other person. We mourn because we feel the loss, and not because of our concern for the departed.

Q. 543. Would it be possible that in the same family we could be weeping and rejoicing for the same soul—where a grandfather has died, and a new child's born?

A. Yes. Sometimes attachments bring us back to the same family. It is not strange that you leave this world as a grandfather and come back as your own grandson?

Q. 544. The general point of view of the Christians is to go back to the grave because the person who has been interred is resting and he will go back and grieve, and grieve, and grieve. That was my reason for asking whether Radha Soami influence should be strongly for cremation, instead of interment, because it would take away that incentive?

A. Brother, I would not like to insist on anything. Whatever the family custom is or whatever way anybody feels like disposing of the dead body is all right. You cremate, you bury. Anyway, burial gives good business to some people, and everybody wants business. (Laughter) for the soul, it makes absolutely no difference in what manner the dead body is disposed of. As far as Sant Mat is concerned, we do not try to differentiate between burial and cremation. I was reading in a book, where some people expose the dead bodies to vultures. There was a reason for it. It was a small island and they had neither wood for cremation nor space enough to bury them. They were surrounded by water, and they

thought if they would place the body by the sea, the vultures would come and finish the body.

Every custom has a reason behind it. Without investigating the reasons we become slaves of the rituals and ceremonies and dogmas, and forget about the purpose of doing it. But circumstances can change, they can differ. For example, we always cremate with wood; but if wood is very expensive or scarce, or it is not practical to cremate in the open air, there is no harm in getting it done electrically. That is all right. Now, even in modern India, some people think that it is not good to do it with electricity, that it should be done only with wood, and a certain kind of wood at that. These things are meaningless. So I would not like to bring a ritual into Sant Mat by saying that cremation is the thing or that burial or any other method should be advocated. Each and every satsangi is absolutely free to do whatever he or she wants to do. We have to overcome these notions that these outer things have any bearing whatsoever on our spiritual progress. When we have done our duty as long as we were given the chance to do it, then we must face reality. What will be the use to dwell on grief now? If the departed soul really loved us, he would not like to see us unhappy and miserable in his memory. He would like to see us joyful and happy, and face life lightly. He would not be happy where he is, seeing us miserable and weeping here.

Q. 545. Afterwards, do they still see everything that is going on, the same as before they left?

A. No. They have served their connections as far as that particular birth was concerned, and whatever

contact we may think we have with them after their death is due to the projection of our own mind. They have gone to where their karmas have taken them, and are engrossed in their own karmas. All our grief and worry does not help them in the least; rather, if they are attached to us, we are thereby attracting them back to this world. As previously mentioned, it is our strong attachments that act as roots which we leave behind, and which in turn attract us back here again. So it is much better for us to have our roots in Shabd, which will merge us back into the Lord and, ultimately, all those who are attached to us will merge along with us. That is the best way to help those whom we love and those who are attached to us.

14 (v) ACCEPTING GIFTS

Q. 546. There have been discussions amongst ourselves about receiving and giving gifts. Can you explain this?

A. I have been receiving many letters about that and I have written many replies. You people put too much emphasis on and unnecessarily analyze very small, minor things. Probably the real teachings do not reach you in the right aspect.

There is no harm in accepting and giving gifts. The object is that we should not be a burden on anybody. We have to earn our own living honestly, and live according to our means. We should not be a burden on society, nor on anybody—that is the object. While living in the world, we give things and we accept things. Practical arrangements with our relations, with our friends, naturally, will have to be there. I go to people, I dine with them; they come and they dine with me; but I should not be a burden on them without doing anything for them.

In friendship, in relationship, nothing should weigh on your heart. You should not worry that he has given you and now you are bound to give to him; or that he has not given anything to you, but you have given him so much. If that is the attitude, it is better not to give a gift. We should give and forget, and we should accept and forget. These small things make no difference. We should not try to analyze or give too much importance to these things. We have to live in this world, and this is a world of give and take. There is no harm in these things. The only thing is that we should not be a burden on anybody, nor should we expect people to do for us

without our realizing that we should also do something for them.

This principle of not accepting anything generally comes from our Indian point of view, because we have certain classes of mendicants in the garb of sadhus, as well as other beggars, even professional beggars. They will never give or do anything for you, but they always except you to give something to them. This is wrong. One should not become a burden on society or on any individual families or on any individual person; but in our relations, in our daily dealings, we give things, we accept things; that does not make any difference.

Q. 547. So many say that if you accept gifts, you may have to come back here the next life.

A. If you give from the point of view that you are giving him today and in the next birth you will take from him, then you will have to come back. But if you have no ulterior purpose or motive in giving a gift and in accepting a gift, it is just quits—finished. I do not know about your country, but in India people give in charity from the point of view that in the next birth they will get the reward. They think if they give one dollar today to a beggar, they have sown a seed to get at least twenty dollars in the next birth. From that point of view, it is bad to give, because then you also expect to come back to receive. That is not right.

Q. 548. Then, I also understand if someone comes to you and asks you for anything, if you can give it to them, or if they want a loan, you should not give them a loan, but give it to them free, just out-right?

A. We give loans, we take loans, we borrow money, we pay it back. I do not know why we should analyze

these small things in such a big way. There is no sense in it. The whole world would stand still with your way of thinking. In the world we take loans from the banks, from business concerns, from individuals; we give loans to the banks, to business, to individuals. That is purely a matter of business.

When we give things in charity, we help people, we serve them, but we should never expect a reward. We should not do it with a view to giving one thousand dollars in this life, and expecting it from you in the next birth. That is a wrong attitude. In India some people think that if they give you something in charity, they will get much more in heaven. Probably people at the helm of affairs of those sects put that idea into their minds just to induce them to give charity. I do not know why the professionals have done this, for it is wrong.

A very interesting letter was written to me about an American satsangi. The man wrote, "I am in love with—and she is in love with me. She is my fiancee and I am going to marry her. I want to give her a watch and she refuses that, saying that she does not accept anything from a non-initiate, though she has been going out with me for the last six or seven months and I intend to marry her as soon as my business is set up. I think within six months I may marry her. She has promised to marry me and I have promised to marry her, but she will not even accept a watch. I do not understand this philosophy". Now this is stretching things too far when she can go out with him, when she can dine with him, when she wants to play wife to him, not to accept a watch from him really hurts. I explained to him that probably she did not understand it, that usually

we should not accept gifts indiscriminately when we cannot give in return. Ultimately, they got married. They are both satsangis now. When we stretch things too far or analyze them too minutely, we lose sight of the real significance and purpose behind all this.

Q. 549. Maharaj Ji, going back to the gifts again, giving should be always in he spirit of love and in the name of the Master?

A. Why bring the Master in? (Laughter) Bring yourself in. Give and take. Do not worry about these minor things.

Q. 550. There seems to be an aversion to eating in people's houses, or if I talk to somebody, is there a personal karmic debt by the soul?

A. You should not try to analyze these karmas too minutely. You will get nowhere. The main thing to remember is not to be a burden on anybody. There is no harm in eating in people's houses, no harm in inviting people to your house. We have to live in the world like normal human beings. There is no harm in accepting presents and giving presents. We can also do something for the other person if he does something for us. Naturally, this is the way of the world. The thing that we should try to remember is that we should not be a burden on anybody. We should just try to meet people on an equal basis. That is the main thing.

There is no harm in going to visit people and dining there, provided we can stand that atmosphere. If we are happy within ourselves, we are not going to feel guilty about what atmosphere we have come into. If that atmosphere is pulling us out of our way, if it is pulling us to the senses, then it is wrong and we

should try to avoid it. Otherwise, I would never lay any restrictions on satsangis or initiates regarding mixing with their relations or friends who are not on the Path. We have to mix with others, as normal human beings, as this world requires, but we should be strictly firm in our own principles. We should not be drawn towards the worldly people. They should be drawn towards us.

14 (vi) DISCIPLINE

Q. 551. What is the best way to discipline children?

A. The best way is to be a good example. One has to make a lot of sacrifices for one's children, and one always has to set a good example for them. Their mind is just a clean slate, and their parents are always their heroes. They look up to their parents and notice how they are behaving in this world. That always leaves a deep impression on them, and lasts a long time. Whatever we want to teach them, we can do best by being a good example to them. Supposing one smokes and does not want the child to smoke. How is it possible to impress the child that it is wrong? If the child has seen the parent smoking, how can that advice be effective? If we give advice, but are not living up to all the good advice that we give, the child knows; so that advice does not have any effect at all.

Q. 552. Master, since we are talking about these things, does a parent have a right to punish his children?

A. When one corrects a child with the intention of helping him, it is not really punishment. The disciplinary measure is a punishment when you want to take some revenge. In order to discipline children you have to explain things, you have to be firm and sometimes also a little harsh; but always in the interest of the child, and not to satisfy your own instinct of ego or of anger. While explaining or disciplining, one should not lose one's own balance of mind, but should always keep calm and cool. Sometimes we have to be firm and strong in our views and even in our actions.

Q. 553. We should not permit ourselves to become angry?

A. One should not lose one's own balance.

Q. 554. Are these karmic things which bring about anger?

A. We try to justify in this way all that we are seeing and all that is happening in this world. We can say it is all due to karma; but to take that attitude is definitely a weakness and we must take steps to overcome it. In order to overcome all such evil tendencies we must realize that they are weaknesses. And the only way to realize that and to overcome these weaknesses is to attach our mind to Shabd.

Q. 555. How does one keep from judging and criticizing others and thus take on a posture of self-righteousness? How does one control one's temper in the presence of such a person? How does one deal with such a person?

A. Everybody has to train his own mind. We have to develop our mind to that extent, that we are not affected by any criticism; we are not affected by any public opinion. In fact, we have to train ourselves rather than to train another person to that situation. We must train ourselves to fit into that situation. If the other person loses his temper, we cannot help it. It is for him to control his own mind. But we can control our own mind. If there is one fool under a roof, why do there have to be two? We must control ourselves.

Q. 556 On the question of anger, when living in this world, this society, there is a good deal of frustration. I do not know what difference there is between frustration and anger. I find that I can take it much better if I say some of these things which are making me angry, give some kind of outward expression to them, then I get rid of it.

A. You mean just to lighten yourself?

Q. Yes.

A. Well, prepare the others by informing them that you are just lightening yourself, that is all. (Laughter)

Q. I say to my husband, I am irritable and then?

A. There is no harm if sometimes we do become a victim to strong expressions but we should not keep any grudge in the heart. We should be honest enough to clear any misunderstanding that has arisen, and then just feel light about it.

Q. 557. As citizens of the U.S.A. we really have quite a problem. In my house my husband is very much interested in matters. For instance, we are a powerful country, and so many people are involved in a lot of intrigue and murder, and as a member of a democracy in which the citizen is supposed to help direct the government, we bear a certain guilt for the things that our government does and we live with that daily. I just wondered, because it is something that my husband speaks about continually and so it is part of our household?

A. Sister, just be a good citizen but do not get so much involved in these things that you do not live with yourself. The main thing is that we must live with ourselves. We must live with our meditation and not get so much involved in these outside things that they pull us down and make us forget the real purpose of this human life. It depends on individual circumstances as to how much we should get involved and how much we have to withdraw. We cannot have any hard and fast rule about these things. We have to live in some country and we have to be good citizens of that country. But as to how far we have to get involved in these things, I think our circumstances and our own feelings will tell us.

Q. 558. It is awfully difficult.

A. Yes, these are chains around us to which we have become slaves. We are a slave of a family, we are a slave of a tribe, we are a slave of a city, we are a slave of a country, and then we find that we are a slave of this world and the whole universe. We have small rings around us, which we have formed into a huge chain and have bound ourselves with them. Gradually we have to get out of all these things, and when we get to the Lord, we will find that the whole universe belongs to us.

You have nothing to hate and nothing to feel frustrated about any nation, about any country, about anybody. All that is going on is His creation, and when we become part of Him, the whole creation becomes ours, whether we are in U.S.A., Russia, India, or any other country. We feel that it is all ours then. But since we now have that narrow outlook, we have to do our best, as circumstances permit. By meditation we get rid of this narrow outlook, attain a much broader view eventually, and go about our own work, without letting any of these things bother us.

Q. 559. Maharaj Ji, what is the duty of a statsangi if he finds that his government is persecuting some minority community in a very unjust manner?

A. We should not mingle in politics at all. We should try to live without becoming involved in all that, because otherwise the very purpose of our life stands defeated. We should do our duty, whatever little we can to help, but we should remain sufficiently aloof so as not to get too much involved in these things. There are so many other people here in this world

just for that purpose, and their main function is in these things.

Q. 560. What about the situation when countries are at war and you are in the service and you are forced to kill? Should one become a conscientious objector then?

A. Brother, if you are really sincere and you do not want to kill, the situation will be such that you will never kill. You are always helped not to kill. There is a guiding force behind you which saves you from such situations. The Great Master was in Military Service; his Guru was in Military Service, and they both served until the age of retirement, but they never killed anybody. The Lord is always there to help us in such situations.

Q. 561. What is a satsangi's position in the case of a nation going to war?

A. He has no option but to be a part of that war; yet there is some other force to protect him and to help him under such circumstances, if he does not want to kill.

Q. 562. Say you were in a position where you had to direct men to go out and kill?

A. If it is your duty, you have to do it; but still you will be guided in such a way that nothing bothers you in doing your duty. My own Beloved Great Master was a soldier, in the army, and the Founder of the Colony was also a soldier, but they never had to kill anybody. They were right amidst the wars. Nature helps—the Lord helps when we want it. Circumstances would shape in such a way that you would not have to bother much.

Q. 563. The doctrine of non-resistance, non-violence, particularly not taking life, has been an important part in Indian history. What is the teaching of Sant Mat on this point?

A. We practise non-violence. We do not kill birds or animals for food, nor are we to kill anything for sport. That is non-violence, and non-violence is based on the karma theory.

Q. 564. Can the five perversions be overcome all at one time, or overnight?

A. No, sister. By and by, the more we are attached to Shabd, the more we are being detached from the senses. It is always a slow process.

Q. 565. Master, do the five enemies leave all at the same time, or is it possible for one to leave and the four to remain?

A. They go, slowly and slowly, one by one.

Q. 566. Can one, for instance pride, can that be gone, and still yon have to deal with the others?

A. They become ineffective gradually, one by one.

Q. 567. Do the senses always misguide, or can the senses be of help?

A. As long as the mind is a slave of the senses, we are away from the destination. Our destination is upward. The trend of the senses is downward. Anything which keeps us away from the Lord, naturally, is misguiding us. A lover never appreciates anything that keeps the beloved away. We make karma under the sway of the mind and senses, and our karma keeps us away from our Lord, the Beloved.

Q. 568. My experience shows me that the average person does not see above the five senses.

A. Every person is not meant to see all that.

Q. 569. Is there any way that the average person can see more than through his five senses? That is the way people judge life and do not understand any other way. I have now got the way. I understand. I have read in the Radha Soami books that the average person should make an attempt of some sort to go in and try to learn more than his five senses show him or tell him ?

A. Brother, you are yourself answering your own question.

Q. 570. They should listen to us. I try to apologize, being that you are here, I should explain.

A. No, no, no, I am happy to explain. Do not bother. I have come all the way—over eleven thousand miles—to explain certain things.

Q. 571. An individual in India would make better progress because there are less temptations?

A. No, I do not think so. As far as progress is concerned, the place does not make any difference. I, sometimes, find the Westerners are more sincere than the Indians. Whetever they do, they do sincerely, after they have satisfied their intellect. It does not make any difference whether you are born in India or America, in the West or the East anywhere else. You have to pick up the thread where you left it. It hardly makes any difference.

Q. 572. Do you think observation is cultivated by abstinence from excessive talk?

A. Well, we would have less trouble in this world if people would learn to guard the tongue. When they probe into the affairs of others, they unnecessarily create trouble.

Q. 573. I suppose it is just like saying, "If I had only kept my mouth shut, everything would have been all right"?

A. That is right. We learn by experience. This is what we learn by experience.

Q. 574. Master, we speak about the love in the heart. How did this relationship between heart and love ever arise? This connection we talk of?

A. The Lord has given every part of the body a certain function. Seeing is done with the eyes, smelling with the nose, eating with the mouth, and the feeling of emotion in the heart. So love is felt through the heart. These are physical functions of the body.

Q. 575. On that question, I sense more feeling in the solar plexus or in my throat than in my heart. Perhaps I do not know where my heart is? (Laughter)

A. Sister, they are all combined. When the heart feels, the throat is choked, tears come in the eyes, and the face is flushed. So you cannot confine love just to the heart. Rather, you feel this sensation in the whole body—from the feet to the head—physically. You may feel it here in the throat, in the eyes or in the head; in fact in your whole being. That is different, but it arises from the heart. Of course, the spiritual heart center is the eye center, and what we experience spiritually is felt with even greater intensity from there upward.

Q. 576. Language creates problems of communication?

A. That is right but love has no language. You meet somebody and you do not understand each other's language, yet you are in love with each other. Do you need to explain with words? You both understand without speaking anything. That is what I always say, words are not the only means of communication.

There is some understanding, some realization which comes with the help of love.

Q. 577. Is there any danger of confusion in the normal use of words or language inside? If we try to communicate with our God, if we try for example to pray with words or to explain an idea to ourself?

A. We do not need any language to explain to ourselves.

Q. 578. I read in the Sant Mat literature how a man was in the process of making a coffin when his own son fell from a roof and was killed. When someone came and told him, it did not seem to bother him at all. He just went on making the coffin for him and someone said, "Do you not love your son?" And he replied, "It was all planned that he should go and I had nothing to do with it." A man like that must have been very highly advanced?

A. That is right. That is a story of Guru Nanak's disciple, Lalo. He was a very advanced soul. You will find that incident related in *Spiritual Gems* (Letter No. 143).

14. (vii) DESTRUCTION AND CONTROL OF PESTS, MERCY KILLING

Q. 579. Master, what is our position regarding spraying of gardens to prevent insects and so forth from eating or otherwise destroying vegetables and flowers?

A. Brother, some of these things are necessary in order to live in this world. We have to draw a line somewhere. If we analyze minutely, we will find that even now, as we are breathing, we are killing many insects. This whole room is filled with insects; as you walk on the ground, you kill many insects; when you drink water, you kill many insects—what you call bacteria, or you may give them any name; but the very air you breathe is filled with souls. So it is impossible to live in this world without killing anything. One cannot even breathe or take a single step without doing so. Therefore, saints always advise us to have the very least load that is necessary to live in this world, so we are allowed to take vegetables, even though they also have souls. Now the scientists also prove that vegetation contains life.

We cannot help killing insects and rodents by spraying or otherwise protecting a crop; but naturally there is a difference in the degree of karma incurred, just as there is a difference in degree of crime in our worldly laws. We should not try to find a justification for killing nor should we kill unnecessarily. Where we have to, we may, for we have to in order to live and exist in this world. This whole world is full of crime and of creatures killing one another. As you have just heard in the discourse, this whole world is nothing but darkness, and one cannot live without killing. The eating of vegetation and protection of

crops is more or less "innocent killing", as we have to live in this world, and in order to live we have to do all sorts of these things. The main thing is that we must do the least possible killing for our existence—only as much as is absolutely necessary to maintain a healthy body.

Q. 580. This may be a very silly question, but it has troubled many minds. In the lower animal kingdom, which does not have the power to discriminate between what is right and what is wrong, what power has placed in the lion or the tiger, the instinct to kill other helpless animals in order to survive, and why is it so?

A. Brother, this whole world is a field of killing and being killed. You cannot live in this world without killing something. There is a constant struggle for existence, and all creatures are always killing and being killed. That is why all the saints tell us that this world is not worth considering as our permanent residence at all, and we are simply passing through it in order to pay off our karmas, and at the same time trying not to make new ones so that we may not have to come back again. In this world, one is either killing or being killed. So the saints say, "Leave this world and come back to the Lord with us". We cannot reform this world, and this world will never become a heaven, but will remain at daggers drawn and there always will be killing in this world. Saints do not come to reform this world. They just come to take us away from this world. (At this place Maharaj Ji related in detail how this world is a place of struggle, of good and bad, and how to find peace in this world while doing our worldly duties and attending to our spiritual practice—referring to that as the strong shoes which permit us to go

through and walk over the thorns of this world without being affected by them—all of which is mentioned elsewhere, so it is not repeated here.) We should not be concerned with this world. It will continue like this, for it is a place of imperfection and has to remain that way as long as it exists, as I have explained many times. But through the help of the saints, we have the opportunity to detach ourselves from it and go back into the lap of our Father, the Original Home of Perfect Bliss, never again to return to this field of struggle and killing.

Q. 581. My son has a ranch and they have a lot of trouble with moles, gophers and so forth getting into the irrigation ditches and they cannot farm the ground. What is the proper procedure when we are not supposed to kill things?

A. Sister, we should try to avoid killing as much as we can, but sometimes we just cannot help it. There is a certain type and amount of killing which you cannot avoid for your existence in this world, but one should not try to justify that killing. You should not go out of your way to kill these things but where you have to do it for your existence, you cannot help it.

Q. 582. If a child is born mutilated, paralyzed or terribly deformed, and survives, as some children just exist but have no control over their own movements, or some cannot even move, and are bedridden all the time, would mercy-killing be allowed, if it is allowed in that country? If you were a satsangi doctor, would you kill that child if mercy-killing were legal?

A. I do not believe in mercy-killing at all, and I think it is not legal anywhere in the world, yet. Though I know little of the law, mercy-killing is not

allowed. Mercy-killing is definitely wrong from a spiritual point of view. In mercy-killing, we are trying to take something into our own hands that we think is mercy. If we had to follow such a line of thought, I think half the world would be killed tomorrow. Everybody is suffering; everybody is in agony; everybody is in pain; people are starving; people are diseased; people are unhealthy in this world. That does not mean that we should start killing right and left. If we did, we would have to kill ourselves, too, for we are in agony with ourselves. So the question of mercy-killing does not arise. The Lord knows best when to take life—He gives it and He takes it. Nature always keeps its level. The Lord knows best how and when to kill. People are killed in wars, in storms, in earthquakes and so many other ways that He alone can control. Why should we try to be His rivals? We should be helpful to the handicapped to the best of our ability and not try to take away their life.

Q. 583. Master, if one finds an animal or a bird that is badly hurt and is in agony, is it wrong to take it out of its misery?

A. Brother, if we start analyzing like this, probably we will have to put an end to three-fourths of the world. (Laughter) Who is not in agony ? We should analyze within ourselves as to whether we are at war within ourselves or not. Are we happy in this world? Are we even physically or mentally happy to be in this world? If we will just analyze our own self, we will find that everyone of us is most miserable with himself. Everybody is playing to the tune of his own karma, and despite all that, no one likes to die. So, whether human beings or animals

or birds, we should try to help them, not put an end to their life. When you go to hospitals you find people are crying in physical pain. Do you think they should all be killed, straight away?

Q. 584. No, I mean an animal that was obviously dying?

A. But, whether man or animal, we do not know whether he is obviously dying or he is getting a new birth. It is for that individual to clear his own karmas. We have to help him, whether it is medical aid or whatever is humanly possible. We should give all the help we can, but we should never try to take it in our own hand to do away with his life. We have no right to do so. There is no mercy in killing. We should help to the best of our ability, wherever we can, but still, with our best intentions, in certain situations, we really cannot help. They are paying for their karmas—whatever they have sown, they shall reap. But we have to help them with our best intelligence, capabilities and resources. It is only to the extent that He wants us to succeed that we will be able to help them. So we should do our best to help them and leave the results to Him.

If we start from the point of view of mercy-killing, as I told you, I do not know how many people we might have to kill. Politicians throw bombs, wiping away humanity, and they also justify that killing. But whether the Lord justifies it or not, remains to be seen. Whether we have done good or bad, He will tell us. We can judge only with our intellect. We may think we have saved many humans by killing a hundred thousand or two hundred thousand. But these are all justifications for our own weaknesses. We should help, not kill. Christ

said, "Love one another". He also said that if someone slaps you on one cheek, you should turn the other. What does that mean? It means that we should have no malice against anybody; not even against our enemies. We have to show them love, devotion, mercy; and give them love for hatred and not hatred for hatred. We will help them practically by giving them love; by giving them help; by giving them service. We do not help anybody by taking away his life.

Q. 585. Master, while using leather from animals for shoes, we are not consuming flesh, but we do voluntarily give consent to the death of these animals. Is that sanctioned?

A. Yes, sister, that is right. There are no restrictions on wearing apparel. We have to take a practical, objective view in this life, and to collect the least possible load, which should be cleared by meditation and devotion to the Lord. Our main purpose of living in this world should be God-Realization. Then we can justify wearing leather shoes; wearing clothes, and eating fruits and vegetables; but all the same, the karmas are there.

Q. 586. But, could we not give up these things ?

A. If you can do without, there is nothing like it. But if you even do without shoes and clothing, it does not make much difference as far as incurring karma is concerned; for, as I told you, even when breathing, walking or drinking water, you are killing. So we have to take a practical view in life and try to collect the least possible load, which should be cleared by meditation and devotion to the Lord.

14 (viii). ASSOCIATIONS, ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Q. 587. Maharaj Ji, sometimes we are asked questions like—I cannot understand why is a person initiated, when he still attends meetings of different societies, other than our own?

A. Sister, we should not pay much attention to these things. I generally tell everybody at the time of Initiation that I do not bind you to any particular thing. I do not want you to withdraw from any point, from any circle, any organization, any society, as long as you remain on the principles of Sant Mat and you attend to your meditation. The meditation automatically withdraws them from all those things, eventually. When they no longer feel interested in them, they do not live in these things, then you do not have to tell them, for it comes from their own heart. It is much better not to tell them not to attend that meeting or to leave that organization. There is no use in telling them. When they feel the bliss of the elevation in their own heart, they will not feel at home in those places, they will feel that they do not fit into those things, then they themselves will discontinue those things and will be nearer to you. If you, on the other hand, try to pull them away and tell them, "Do not go", their mind will always want to go to that side from where they are being stopped. So there is no sense in hurting anybody by telling them, "Why do you attend that meeting, where is the sense in your going to that group"? and all that. But if you create an atmosphere full of love and devotion in your own group meetings, they would be so happy that they would not like to go anywhere else. In that way you automatically attract them towards that atmosphere.

Q. 588. They are initiates who ask those questions, and then we have to answer them and know not what to tell them.

A. You tell them that we have no organization, that we are not bound to any particular religion, we are free to go anywhere we feel like going. We are only concerned with devotion to the Lord, with our meditation. We are not bound to any particular thing and that we are not stopped from going anywhere. We go where we feel like going, and when we no longer feel we are a part of that activity, we ourselves will no longer wish to go there.

Q. 589. Maharaj Ji, some initiates seem to think we are supposed to be perfect in this group, so they just get the wrong impression. I consider, in Sant Mat, the practice for spiritual development is a personal responsibility. I am only responsible to myself. Is that correct? And it is up to me to realize that spiritual development, I have to see the best way that I can and act in the best manner that I can. I cannot tell anyone else whether they are on the right track or not. Is that correct?

A. Brother, there are two things. With some people we are so much attached, we are so much in love as we call it, so much interested in them that we cannot bear to have them go to a different direction, so we try to persuade them affectionately. The idea behind the affection and love for them is not to show off that they are wrong and I am right, or why you do not do as I am doing—that idea should not be there. We should be so much interested in them that we can take the liberty to tell them that perhaps they are wrong and that it will be more beneficial and helpful to them if they come to this side. But we should never force anybody and we should not try to hurt anybody. If they want to go to any side, let them go anywhere.

The conviction, the love, must come from within themselves, for then only will it be solid like a rock; otherwise, it is merely built on sand. In the latter case, the decision would be due to your emotional influence, your atmosphere, and when your influence is not there, they would again go astray. That is no use. We simply should tell them the advantages over all, being ourselves on the Path, and that it is for them to make up their own mind about what is best for them. We are mainly concerned with ourselves, but we have certain responsibilities in this world towards our friends and relations and others, so we try to guide them; but if they do not feel like being guided, we should not feel perturbed about it.

Q. 590. Master, when we are working daily with our colleagues, and criticism comes and others join in against us, could we accept this strictly as due to us or should we ever attempt to hold our own? Or?

A. Brother, if we think we will be able to solve the problems of the world, of the people around us, not one whole lifetime or even a hundred lives would be sufficient. We just have to rise above these things, these problems, and not be affected by them at all. What is to happen, let it happen around us. That is why the Saints often give us the example of the lotus flower. Its roots are always in the water, but the flower itself is above the water. With the help of meditation and the Sound, we have to rise above these things. We cannot solve the problems of the world. History records that so many Saints and social reformers as well have come to this world, but it has not improved in any way. Rather, there is more evil, in spite of the best efforts of the Saints and the

reformers. But saints do not come for that purpose. No saint comes to reform this world. He just comes to collect his own sheep and take them back to the Lord, as Christ has also done in his time. He, too, said that he did not come to bring peace into this world. Saints always advise us to remain in the Will of the Lord, to submit ourselves to Him. That means that we should face both, the happy and unhappy situations, which are our good and our bad karmas—boldly and cheerfully. We should neither be so much affected by the bad that we forget the Lord; nor should we be too elated over the good karmas that we forget the Lord and turn to the worldly pleasures. Whether good or bad, in both conditions we are always to remember the Lord. So the atmosphere around us will never change; it is we who have to change.

14 (ix). DO'S AND DON'TS OF SANT MAT

Q. 591. Maharaj Ji, would you tell us, besides being on the diet, not taking alcohol and so forth, and besides not killing and the regular abstinences, what some other karmic actions would be that we could avoid in this life?

A. Nothing else. All other good qualities will come automatically with devotion to the Lord. If we make the Sant Mat principles a part of our life, then we abstain from meat, fish, fowl and eggs or anything containing them, we do not take alcoholic drinks, we have a good moral character and we are devoting time regularly and punctually to the spiritual practice. When we do that, I personally feel and think that all other good qualities of a human being appear in us like cream on milk. You do not have to do anything else to get or develop those qualities, for they naturally will come in you. The nearer we are to the Lord, the more devotion we feel for the Lord, the more the good qualities automatically will come within us. We will become part and parcel of those qualities, without doing anything else.

Q. 592. Do I understand from what has been said that we cannot actually reach happiness or heaven on this earth in our present form and that actually our soul has to reach a higher plane in some other form before we can really have happiness?

A. No, brother. What I am trying to explain is that as long as our attention is rooted in this world, we will never be able to get happiness. Even if we achieve all the comforts of the world we cannot be happy. We will be really happy only when the soul merges back into Him. As long as the soul is separated from the Lord, it can never be happy. We

will get peace while in this world only when we are really devoted to the Lord within us. When we are working our way up, we are in tune with Him and we will also get happiness in this world. If we forget Him, this whole world becomes a place of agony and misery for us. That is what I am trying to explain. (Maharaj Ji gave the example of the child enjoying a fair as long as it was holding the father's hand; but when it let go his father's hand and became lost, it was miserable and bewildered in the very same fair.) We will only get happiness in His devotion. If we forget Him, we cannot get happiness from this world at all.

Q. 593. In becoming attached to God, does that mean one is no longer attached, for instance, to one's husband or wife, or brother, or mother, or someone like that; I mean, does that exclude them?

A. Sister, there is a difference between attachment and duty. A wife has a certain duty towards her husband. A husband has a certain responsibility, a duty, towards his wife. Yet there may not be any attachment. If there had been real attachment, there would not have been a single divorce in the States. This attachment that couples have is just a self-deception. They feel that they are attached, and when a situation arises, they feel that they hate each other. Where does that attachment go then? Those attachments are simply karmic relations of give and take. Certain responsibilities have to be fulfilled, and we have to play a certain role accordingly, whether as a husband, a wife, a child or some other relationship. We try to feel we are attached and yet within our heart we know we are not. If that attachment had been so strong we would not have forgotten our

own mother and sister and father, and we would not have fallen in love with another person. We were feeling so attached to parents, but on finding another attachment or with the lapse of time, we forget them. Where has that attachment gone?

Attachment really means forgetting the whole world, except the object of attachment. But we are shifting every day from place to place, from person to person, so we really are not attached. We are to live in this world as a matter of duty, taking full responsibility as a wife or a husband, as a father or a son, as a citizen, and so on, and yet not be attached to them nor be affected by them. For example: When a married daughter goes to her parents, she visits her brothers and sisters, she works in the house, is affectionate and very loving to her parents, and yet she is attached to her husband living thousands of miles away from her. Her mind is not where she is. It is somewhere else. We are to live in this world like that. We have to be in the world, doing all our duties, yet our heart should be where it belongs. If a bee sits on the edge of a bowl of honey, it will enjoy the taste of the honey and fly away with dry wings. If it jumps into the bowl of honey, neither can it taste the honey nor will it be able to extricate itself; it will die.

If we keep our attention, our mind, our heart in the Lord, we will enjoy his whole world. If we forget Him, this whole world will become miserable for us, for then we are in love with the things that He has given us and have foorgotten the Giver. We are not grateful to the Giver, but are drowning ourselves in what He is giving us. We can only enjoy what He gives us, if we are grateful to the One who gives.

Instead, we are attaching ourselves to what He give and are trying to detach ourselves from Him. So, we have to attach ourselves to Him and, to nothing else. By doing so, we enjoy this world too, just as the bee can enjoy the honey and fly away at will, unscathed, as long as it does not leave the security of the edge of the bowl and get stuck in the honey.

Q. 594. This person I referred to showed so much power....?

A. Brother, I cannot say anything about any personality, but can only tell you that saints always preach humility. Knowing everything, they will never show that they know anything. They will always preach and practise humility, meekness, submission to His Will. There is no ego in the Saints; but I am nobody to comment on anybody.

Q. 595. Master, why is Sant Mat and the experiences of the initiate so esoteric, so secretive? Why cannot the initiate compare notes with another initiate? It is my understanding of Sant Mat that it is a science of the soul; and any scientist, to test the validity of his findings, would like to compare notes with somebody else.

A. Brother, there is always danger of ego coming in. When you share your internal experiences with anybody, you are inclined to give yourself airs, and you lose what you have. Also, when people know that you are spiritually advanced, they may try to take advantage of you, of your powers. Then you may be tempted and thus lose what you had gained.

Q. 596. But how is one to know he is experiencing reality? He might be experiencing a figment of his imagination? And it might be a false power that he thinks he has?

A. Imagination will last for a day, for two days, for three days. If the same thing happens to one,

two or three people, one could say that it is imagination; but not when it happens to thousands. It can be imagination only if it happens just with you or another two or three persons; however, when the same thing happens with everybody, it cannot be just imagination. Anyway, at the time of Initiation, you are told how to differentiate between the false and the real.

Q. 597. But how do we know that the same thing is happening with everybody until we compare notes?

A. We can read of these experiences in the writings of the Saints. They have recorded their experiences, and you can find them in our literature. Then you can compare to see whether or not your individual experiences are the same. When the experiences of an Arabic Saint, of one born in Persia, of one born in India, or of those born in other countries, all happen to be the same, that could not be just imagination. When those Saints who never got a chance to meet each other, to exchange notes which were written at different times and in different languages, how would their experiences be the same if they were not genuine ? When we compare our notes with them we know that our experiences are not just hallucinations or imagination.

Q. 598. You say the Saints have written these things down? In my small amount of reading I have not been able to come across ...?

A. That is found in all the Sant Mat literature which we are placing before the public. You have just read one article, and by making a research you will find corroborations from at least sixty people on the same point.

Q. 599. Well, let us say I see a house that is purple and it has sixteen windows in it. Will the writings tell me that what I am experiencing is not a figment of my imagination, that that house is at Trikuti level, or Sahansdal Kanwal level, and what you find by going to your left after you reach this point?

A. Once you are on the Path, if you will use the test given to you at the time of Initiation, you will always know whether it is your imagination or whether it is real. These misgivings arise because we neither face the reality nor even realize the imagination. When we are there, we know whether it is a reality or imagination. Definite signs are given to us. Definite tests are given to us for our use to determine all this. Here and there we may exchange notes with our fellow travelers too.

Q. 600. Master, you were saying that we should keep our spiritual experiences to ourselves. In the event one encounters obstacles in meditation, should one not speak of that also?..or keep that a secret?

A. Sister, the only one who can help you remove those obstacles is your Master. There is no use speaking to others about these things, for nobody else will be able to help you. If you speak to your Master, you will get guidance and help.

Q. 601. When we have a feeling, or an experience, how do we know if it is spiritual or if it comes from God, or if it is a figment of our own mind, our imagination?

A. Brother, we have all sorts of experiences. We have experiences of our imagination and we have spiritual experiences too. But, you can always differentiate whether you are having spiritual experiences or not. For example, when we are told that we are going to have such and such an experience

through our meditation, we cannot call it hallucination. We cannot call it imagination, because the same experience has been described by so many saints, in so many different countries and at so many different times. Consequently, when our experience is corroborated by the experiences of those people with whom we have never had the chance even to meet or to know their language, or to go to their countries, we cannot say that that experience is just our imagination. When it is corroborated by so many saints, by so many other people, naturally, our experience is genuine and has to be the same.

For instance, when you read a guide book—how to go from New York to London by sea, and what things you are going to see on your way—, when you are on the ship, you see those things. You cannot say it is mere imagination because you have been informed beforehand about what you are going to see on the way. You have read it in so many guide books from the travel agent, as to what you are going to see on the way. When your own experiences are being corroborated by the experiences of all those people who have traveled on that path, who had the same things to see, the same things to do or to face, naturally, you will feel convinced that your own experience and what you see is reality. You are not dreaming, you are not imagining. You are seeing what you are supposed to see, what you are told will be there. The same is the case with a spiritual experience.

Q. 602. Maharaj Ji, if someone owes a bill and does not pay it, should you write it off or should you take legal steps to collect it? How would karma come into that?

A. We should not try to analyze these things in too

much detail. We have to take a practical, objective view in life. If you think he owes, you can go to the law court. If it is in your karma to collect, you will get it; and if it is not in your karma to get it back, you will lose your case.

14 (x) HUMAN SUFFERING AND RELIEF, INCLUDING NARCOTICS, INTOXICATION, BIRTH CONTROL, DIVORCE AND OTHER PROBLEMS

Q. 603. Master, I have heard that pain is curative. Are we to endure pain as much as we can or are we allowed to take medicine for pain?

A. If we are ill and we have pain and we think that we should not take medicine because it will interfere with our karma, that is absolutely a wrong conception of karma. We should always try to take an objective view of life. All the scientific achievements and all that we have available to us should be put to use for our physical comfort, not forgetting the end, as I said yesterday. There is no harm in consulting a doctor to try to get relief from the pain. If it is in our karma to get relief, then only will we get relief from the pain. If it is in our karma to go to a doctor to get relief, naturally we will go to a doctor, follow his instructions and use that medicine or remedy. So we should not think that we will interfere in our karma if we try to get rid of this pain. That is not a practical objective outlook. We have to live in this world.

Q. 604. Is it also equally possible or proper to administer help when we find others in similar circumstances?

A. We should try to help anybody and everybody in that situation, whether by medicine or by advice or by consoling them. We should try to help everybody.

Q. 605. I am aware of the requirements of a satsangi and the reasons for these are clear. I wish to know whether medication is permitted and, if not, the reasons.

A. Sister, there is no harm in taking medicine. We

do not want these medicines for sensuous pleasures, and it is wrong to take them for such purposes. We only want to preserve or regain our health so that we can devote ourselves to the Lord. So there is absolutely no harm in depending upon medicine in the time of need.

Q. 606. Do you believe that certain chemicals that they are using now in modern psychiatry for transcending the ego, so you believe this is possible to give us a certain amount of spiritual experiences?

A. They will not give you spiritual experiences. They put you to sleep, or you may feel that you are in a trance, or you may not know where you are, or have some sort of hallucinations. You would not have any power to go up or to come back. Just as intoxicating drinks put you out and you have no control over yourself, similarly, those tablets or capsules or that drug may have the same effect as that of alcohol or other drugs, as far as the mind is concerned.

Q. 607. I have met many people who claim that by using these chemicals they have gone into a region of ecstasy which they believe is the Supreme. Some claim they have gone into another world and have drawn pictures of creatures they have seen...?

A. I think these must be the advertisements of the commercial firms for selling these chemicals.

Q. I do not think so. These things are on the black market. I have heard that Hindus use these things for various spiritual purposes.

A. We have in India what is called *bhang*, which is another name for hemp. Some people drink it and they become inebriated. It is another way of intoxication. One may say that he is not drunk, but it is all the same; there is absolutely no difference.

The use of any narcotic for sensual pleasure is a definite hindrance to spiritual progress.

Q. 608. If someone was tired of life and asked the Master for a release, could the Master release his death?

A. Well, sister, one should never be tired of life at all. We should try to make the best use of this life. Whatever life span the Lord has given us, we should try to live with the best possible means, in the best way possible, and always keep our Path and our Goal, our Objective, in view. We have to travel to reach that destination, but we generally become tired because, due to certain circumstances, things are not happening according to our desires. If we get rid of this body, we do not know what type of body we will get, whether we would be better off, or it would be still worse. We should always try to make the best use of the present and never wish such a thing at all.

Q. 609. Is there any karma involved if a person resorts to surgical sterilization? Or to effect birth control?

A. If it is in his karma to go through a surgical operation and not to get any children, he will have to do that. Nothing happens without karma. So that was his karma which led him to that.

Q. 610. Last night somebody asked me if Sant Mat advocates divorce?

A. I am sorry if anyone has that impression about Sant Mat. Sant Mat rather unites families, tries to create harmony in families. I always advocate that meditation makes one a better husband, a better wife, a better son, a better father. If it does not, then it

is we who have failed in our meditation. It should bring us together. We should understand our responsibilities, our duties in life; not to escape them, but to fare them, to face reality. I hate to see people getting divorced, especially if they are Satsangis. It actually pains me.

Getting divorced, as far as marriage is concerned, is not right. Divorce, in a bigger sense, we all get by meditation or divorcing ourselves from the worldly attachments. We are divorcing ourselves from worldly roots and taking our mind and soul up to the Lord. We are getting divorced from the world and getting attached to the Lord. That you can say, but in the family life I am very much against divorce. That is my personal view. I never force anybody.

Q. 611. Even in our daily life we all face problems. If it is not the work that we want it to be, should we try and force the issue or just sort of go along with it and take it as it is? Things will come?

A. We should do our best and leave the results in the hands of the Lord. We should not feel dejected if we cannot achieve that for which we have worked. It simply was not destined for us. In that case our destiny was only to work and not to get its fruit. Other people do not work, and yet they get the fruit. That is their destiny. It is all individual karma.

Q. 612. A lot of us here have children and grand children. They come to us and want to know what we are doing when we meditate and so forth. How far can a young child go before being initiated in this work? I mean, how would you answer them?

A. You can just explain the principles to them and tell them to try to have devotion to the Lord in their mind. Children naturally pick up from their parents,

but I think we should in this modern age at least, make them feel that they are making their independent selection to follow Sant Mat. We should guide them, explain to them, be good examples to them and let them grow up to make their own decisions as to what they want when they reach maturity.

Q. 613. Do you think the motivation of the people who commit suicide is becuase they get tired of the world and want to meet the Lord?

A. No, no! They do not commit suicide to meet the Lord. They are cowards not to face the world. They commit suicide because there are certain desires which they cannot fulfill, and they cannot stand that. So they will have to come back to fulfill those desires.

Q. 614. Is suicide the greatest sin?

A. I think so. We do not get the human form so easily, and just to waste it, is the greatest sin, no doubt.

Q. 615. Do you not think the suicidal tendency is sometimes sublimated into wanting to leave the body, such as in meditation?

A. No, it is not wanting to leave the body. It is rather not getting what you want while being in the body.

Q. I mean, is meditation a sublimated way?

A. No. One should never have this approach to meditation. That is a cowardly approach and a betrayal of the privilege of having the human body.

Q. 616. If satsangis develop supernatural powers, they are not advised to use them, are they?

A. If we use the supernatural powers that we have

gained through meditation, we do it always at our own expense. We lose what we have gained. The Lord does not bestow that power on us to become His rival. He just gives it to us for our own benefit, to clear our own karmas, to clear our own Path, to go back to Him. If we start using these supernatural powers for other purposes, we inflate our ego and we lose what we have. So I personally advise satsangis never to dabble in these things at all.

15. PERSONAL

Q. 617. Will the Master tell us of the many foreign visitors at the Dera every year?

A. We have quite a number of them. This time there were about sixty-five foreigners during the season.

Q. 618. How long do they generally stay there?

A. That varies according to each individual's time at his disposal. Some stay only a few days, some a few weeks, some a few months or more. We have a very good season right from the first of October to the middle of April. Everybody is most welcome, but after the middle of April it becomes very hot. Our summer is sweltering and it is very difficult to bear the heat, the dust and the hot winds. We do not have the facility of air-conditioning and such comforts. So, winter is the best time to visit the Dera; moreover, I am usually there in the winter months.

Q. 619. October to when, did you say?

A. October to middle of April. We have printed a *Guide to the Colony*. I do not know whether Mr. Ross has a copy here or not, but you can get it through him. It was printed for the satsangi tourist visitors to the Colony. You will find all the necessary information in that. If there is anything else that you wish to know, you are most welcome to write to the Secretary or to me. You will get full information.

Q. 620. Does it get pretty cold there in the winter? Does it snow there?

A. Oh, no! Sometimes it goes below zero (Centi-

grade) and we may have a little frost in the morning. The winter is very pleasant and the days are usually sunny. You would love the winter there. The weather is conducive to good health. Sometimes it feels pretty cold for a couple of days, when it rains, but we have electricity and use small electric heaters.

Q. 621. What is it necessary for anybody to do, who wants to visit there?

A. He is most welcome, that is all.

Q. 622. Lots of work to do?

A. I do not think there is any work for the foreigners there, unless they want to do anything. Board and lodging are absolutely free. If they want to do anything, they are most welcome to do so; and if they do not want to do anything, they are still most welcome. There is no compulsion there—absolutely none.

Q. 623. That is a paradise.

A. Practically, most foreigners do nothing except running about after me. (Laughter)

Q. 624. Master, the first thing people say to me when I tell them about this place is always, there must be some catch if they do not charge. How do they make a living? How do they get by? What do they do? And I do not know how to answer them.

A. Come and see for yourself. Or you could ask Mr. Ross or Miss Eunice.

Q. 625. What kind of fruit do they raise there?

A. We have no commercial activity. We have no agricultural activity. We have some land for our

building program, but until we can utilize it for that purpose for which it was intended, that portion on which the buildings have not yet been started, is used to raise a few vegetables for our kitchen, and we have a little citrus fruit also. The kitchen is a free community kitchen, which we call *Langar*, and that is open to everybody, any time. Some who have been there must have told you that on our annual days we have over two hundred thousand people eating there, in that Langar, at each meal. And all those people just serve among themselves and some among their number cook the food; they bring everything and they eat it themselves. We do not have paid help there.

All our land is for building purposes, and our buildings are coming up quite rapidly, but we have certain difficulties of finances, material shortages and all that. So, in the meantime, the land is utilized for raising vegetables and citrus fruits for use at the Colony. But it is not a fraction of what is consumed there.

Q. 626. How is the water?

A. Very tasty. I do not know from a chemical point of view, but very tasty and very healthy too. I always tell the foreigners when they come there that they should weigh themselves. When they leave they are usually about ten pounds heavier. (Laughter)

Q. 627. I was twenty pounds heavier.

A. That must be so. You stayed longer. (Laughter)

Q. 628. Maharaj Ji, are you considered a Hindu?

A. I am just a human being, as far as I am concerned.

Q. 629. I mean, is your teaching Hindu?

A. Sister, I have just explained all that. We are all human beings. We are all sons of the same Father. We are a drop of the same Ocean. We are concerned with the teachings of the Saints, and we are to live in this world. You may consider me anything you feel like; or call me an Indian if I am to be confined to any particular country.

Q. 630. Are there other living Masters beside you?

A. Well, brother, I do not consider myself a Master. I am here by the order of my Predecessor. My only qualification is that I have been entrusted with a duty to perform by my Master, and I am trying to do my duty to the best of my ability. There may be many Masters in the world.

Q. 631. Do you personally have a living Guru?

A. No. My Master has departed, but I was initiated by him during his lifetime.

Q. 632. Do you have contact with his soul?

A. One should not try to go into detail in such personal things. You are most welcome to ask me any question about the philosophy.

Q. 633. What is the significance of the two rings that you wear?

A. Sister, there is no significance as far as the West is concerned, because neither is this a marriage ring, nor is this a divorce ring, nor is this some love present to me. (Laughter) My doctor may be here, Dr. Stone. He advised that if I wear a gold ring on this finger it is good for my digestion. So, on his advice I am wearing it for the sake of my digestion,

but more to please my doctor friend. And the other one is not a ring at all. It is just a piece of silver that I had shaped into a ring. Once when I had an attack of piles, a friend of my mother said to me that if I wear this piece of metal, like a ring, on this finger, it presses a certain nerve which will cure my piles. So I am still wearing this. They have no spiritual significance whatsoever. I am wearing them to please certain sentiments of certain people, that is all.

Q. 634. The bracelet—could you explain?

A. (Laughter) Oh, now you would like to do the same thing! I do not mind, sister. This actually is one of the signs of Sikhs. Sikhs are a class who call themselves followers of Guru Nanak, but, as far as I am concerned, I am a follower of my own Great Master. I keep full faith in Him. Besides Him, nothing exists for me; and if I have respect for anybody else it is due to my own Master that I respect them. Without Him I would never have known them. So, for me, all of these Saints are contained in my own Master. I see everyone of them in my own Master.

But, being born in a Sikh family, and being educated in a Sikh school, it was essential for me to wear this sign to indicate that I belonged to a Sikh family. I never wore this during my school and college days nor in the first few years of my professional career, but when I was going to get married, my mother presented me with this bracelet and said, "You have always been rebellious in our family by not following the family conventions or religious conventions of certain families or certain sects, but now since you are going to get married, I would like you to wear this

bracelet so that you may keep up the family tradition. She had tried to find one of the very lightest weight, and a beautiful thing, and I just wear it to please her. It was quite a hard job to put it on, and after a couple of years my hand had grown so that I could not take it off without cutting it—therefore it remains where it is. It has absolutely no significance to me at all.

Q. 635. Maharaj Ji, I am an old woman, and every day since I have been initiated I have prayed for the privilege of meeting my Master. Now I want to express my deep gratitude for your Grace and Mercy and great Love that prompted you to come to America so that we satsangis would have this great privilege. Thank you.

A. Sister, I assure you that I am extremely happy over my visit. I have been through almost the whole of United States. This is my last stop, and the devotion, the love, the faith, the hospitality, the generosity of the satsangis, seekers and others, which I have received, is an experience which I can never forget. I really appreciate your devotion, your welcome, and I assure you that I am tremendously happy to see all of you, and I am also grateful to the Lord who has given me this opportunity to come all this way and see all of you individually and collectively.

Q. 636. It is a great grace, because many of us cannot go to India, so you came to us. Thank you.

A. Sister, He has brought me, and I am before you, and we are all thankful to Him.

Q. 637. Master, what is the proper way to pronounce 'Maharaj Ji'? And what is the proper salutation in corresponding with you?

A. I do not believe in any ritual, any salutation or any formality. You can write to me any way you like and greet me in whatever way it suits you. These

words do not make any difference., Even if you do not write to me, I will hear from you. Language and words are not the only means of communication. Do not worry about formalities.

Q. 638. Maharaj Ji, when you leave this country, we are all going to suffer a devastating loss. Can you give us any type of first-aid or comfort to help us through that time when you leave?

A. Brother, as I said yesterday, are you sure I am leaving? (Laughter)

Q. 639. I know that you will always be with us, but I mean your physical presence?

A. Brother, the more we miss anyone, the nearer we are to the one we are missing. We only depart to meet. We are never separated.

16. MAHARAJ JI'S FAREWELL ADDRESS IN NEW YORK CITY ON JUNE 18, 1964

Brothers and Sisters:

This meeting tonight brings to an end the local program of my visit to New York City. It also marks the culmination of my tour of the United States which started six weeks ago in Honolulu. During this relatively short period of time I have been able to travel extensively, thanks to the modern means of communication, and to meet with a large number of people who subscribe to Sant Mat Philosophy and an equally large number of seekers after Truth. This, in fact, was the aim of my tour and I must say that the degree of realization of this aim has far exceeded my expectations. For not only have I been able to hold discourses at the various centers, but I have also been able to discuss, both collectively and individually with brothers and sisters of different shades of opinion and background, spiritual problems from practically all aspects. The fact that I have been able to do so is due entirely to the thorough and efficient arrangements made by my representatives in the United States, namely, Mr. Harvey Myers, Col. E. R. Berg, and Mr. James Replogle, and their respective teams of devoted satsangis for all their hard work in organizing meetings and visits. I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my deep appreciation for all their efforts.

I do feel that I have now a very much clearer idea in my mind of the problems of those who are strongly inclined towards knowledge and practice of Sant Mat Philosophy, that is to say, problems peculiar to the American satsangis and seekers. As I said

on Tuesday, you have in this country evolved a highly advanced society based on material progress which has to be experienced to be believed. And I have been very happy to find evidence enough of the realization that real peace does not stem from such progress and that its pursuit through political, social and economic means is a futile exercise. It is clear, therefore, that we must try to explore the possibilities of peace from the viewpoint of human and spiritual considerations. So long as we do not discover peace within ourselves, we cannot find it outside. Even when God has bestowed every conceivable gift upon us, we are at war within ourselves. The saints never tire of proclaiming that until our soul, which is the essence of the Lord, returns to its Original Home, its quest for peace will never end and its destination will never be reached.

For several years, Americans, both satsangis and seekers, have been visiting the Dera at Beas in India. They have always been most welcome and, with such resources as we possess, we have tried our best to make them feel comfortable. However, I felt somewhat uneasy in my mind over the fact that those who do visit us are only a very small proportion of brothers and sisters here, and there are many who have neither the means nor the time to spare to undertake the long journey to India. I considered, therefore, that it was my duty to extend to the States the practice that I have adopted in India of visiting centers of populations where satsangis mainly reside, so that they are saved time and expense involved in going to the Dera. I leave the States happy in the thought that my visit has served the purpose for which I came, and this was to bring me closer to the hearts and minds of the

American satsangis. I know that a great deal of love and devotion has been generated in the fulfillment of this purpose and I have no doubt that this same love and grace of my Beloved Great Master will bring me back into your midst again.

On this occasion I have no particular message to give you except the classical one that Christ left behind for all humanity, which is, "Love one another". For the greater the love we have for one another, the closer we are together, to me, and to the Lord. It is my hope that the group meetings held at the various centers and the questions and answers following such meetings have brought about a deeper understanding of Sant Mat Philosophy. It is my wish that you will devote yourself to your meditation with this renewed knowledge, love and perseverance.

Thank you.

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